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Near East & South Asia

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Al-Qadhdhafi, Al-Asad Stress Joint Efforts

LD2503141290 Tripoli Domestic Service in Arabic 1330 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] A meeting was conducted this morning between the brother leader of the revolution and President Hafiz al-Asad of the brotherly Republic of Syria. The need for joint pan-Arab efforts to confront the challenges facing the Arab nation, to unite it, and to protect its pride and honour, was reaffirmed during the meeting.

Al-Asad on 'Fraternal' Talks With Al-Qadhdhafi

LD2503143690 Tripoli Domestic Service in Arabic 1330 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Excerpts] President Hafiz al-Asad of the brotherly Republic of Syria left Tubruq this afternoon after having taken part in the Libyan Arab people's marking of the 20th anniversary of the evacuation of British military bases and forces from Libyan territory. President Hafiz al-Asad was accorded a big official and popular send off at the Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir air base. The brother leader of the revolution was in the forefront of those who saw him off. [passage omitted]

President Hafiz al-Asad of the brotherly Republic of Syria made a statement to JANA prior to his departure from the Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir air base, in which he said: On this occasion I would like to address greetings of amity and appreciation, and congratulations to our Libyan Arab masses. I would also like to address greetings to my brother and friend Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, and hope we always would meet in good circumstances. In Libya and our other Arab countries, we have achieved an important triumph over colonialism and the enemies of the Arab nation.

He said: Our talks were fraternal and focused on Arab interests and ways of advancing the Arab homeland based on our appreciation that the Arab nation is going through a phase in which this kind of action is required. [passage omitted]

In any case, the four of us are optimistic about what should be done. There is not doubt what we thought of was in the interest of our Arab nation. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs

PLO Leaders on Syrian Stance, Israeli Changes

LD2203085990 Kuwait KUNA in English 0706 GMT 22 Mar 90

[Text] Kuwait, March 22 (KUNA)—A prominent Palestinian leader here Thursday called on the Syrian Government to "respect the independence of the Palestinian decision" and recognise the state of Palestine. Secretary General of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) Nayif Hawatimah told AL-ANBA' newspaper that Syria must "extend bridges of trust with the Palestinian leadership, recognize the state of Palestine, release all Palestinian political prisoners and respect the independence of the Palestinian decision."

The statements by Hawatimah reflect a growing impatience with the Syrian regime over the relations with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian leader said pressures on the PLO to abandon its right to choose members of a delegation for proposed peace talks with Israel are continuing despite the governmental changes inside Israel. He said these pressures are carried by the United States through Egypt and Sweden, adding that the foreign ministers of the three countries will likely to meet soon to examine the names of Palestinians recommended to take part in the talks with Israel.

Member of PLO's Executive Committee Jamal al-Surani, in another interview with the paper, said the recent changes in Israel entail "a new Arab strategy and unity" because these changes, coupled with the new wave of emigration to Israel, will influence developments in the area. He noted that the PLO is thoroughly examining a new strategy, particularly in light of statements by Israel's new premier Shimon Peres that he will accept the Baker plan in full.

While contending that Peres and the former Premier Yitzhak Shamir are "two faces of the same coin," Al-Surani told the paper that the PLO must be ready to respond to the United States and Egypt if Israel officially accepts the Baker plan. Commenting on the general peace process, the senior Palestinian official said "in fact there is no peace process but an operational to settle things as peace can not be forced on the Palestinian people." "(?Indications) for a settlement (for the conflict) are too far from reality," expressed Al-Surani in a pessimistic note.

'Arafat Meets With Richard Murphy 22 March

LD2303132490 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1205 GMT 23 Mar 90

[Excerpt] Tunis, 23 Mar (KUNA)—Informed Palestinian sources said Palestinian president Yasir 'Arafat, met late last night with former U.S. under secretary for Middle East affairs, Richard Murphy. These sources pointed out in a statement made here today that talks between the two sides tackled the developments witnessed by the Palestinian issue, the developments in the Arab occupied territories, the efforts exerted to enhance the peace process in the Middle East, and the emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union and East Europe to occupied Palestine and their effect on peace in the region. They added president 'Arafat explained to the former U.S. under secretary the steps taken by the Palestinian leadership aimed at establishing a just peace which guarantees the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in conformity with the Palestinian peace initiative endorsed by the PNC in its last session and adopted by the Arab summit in Casablanca. [passage omitted]

Hawatimah on Peres Government, Syrian Stand

JN2303154690 Kuwait AL-ANBA' in Arabic
22 Mar 90 p 29

[By Fathi al-Barqawi in Tunis]

[Text] Nayif Hawatimah, secretary general of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, has revealed the existence of Arab and international pressures on the PLO, especially by the United States through Egypt and Sweden, to respond to the request to supply a list of names of the Palestinian delegation to attend a proposed dialogue with an Israeli delegation. This response is to be conveyed under the counter through Cairo or Stockholm to Washington and Tel Aviv in preparation for the tripartite meeting between the foreign ministers of Egypt, Sweden, and the United States, who then would filter down these names and agree on the members of the Palestinian delegation.

Hawatimah explained these pressures in the same way U.S. Secretary of State James Baker has; Israel has the right to refuse to sit with whoever it does not want to sit, and Washington cannot pressure Israel to sit with someone it does not want to sit with.

Hawatimah added these pressures, which called for a response to the Baker plan if the Israeli Government had accepted minor and procedural changes to it, did not stop until the eve of the Israeli coalition's collapse.

Hawatimah expressed his belief the tasking of Shim'on Peres to form the new Israeli Government in light of proposals concerning the Palestine question calls for consultations within the PLO's institutions. He pointed out Peres has announced he will agree to the Baker plan, and what he means to do is put the ball into another court, which he has not yet defined.

Hawatimah urged the PLO not to remain in the corridor to which Washington has confined it since 1989 with the aim of shelving the PLO's role. This calls for making every effort to convene the five-member Arab meeting between Egypt, Syria, the PLO, Lebanon, and Jordan according to the Casablanca summit resolutions.

Hawatimah called on the Egyptian Government to take a stand supporting the PLO; this would revive the direct U.S.-Palestinian dialogue and facilitate the five-member Arab meeting, relieving them of U.S. pressure that singles out the PLO. He called on Syria to build bridges of trust with the Palestinian leadership, recognize the state of Palestine, release all Palestinian detainees in Syrian prisons, and respect the independence of the Palestinian national decision based on mutual commitment to the Casablanca summit resolutions.

Asked what the PLO would do if Peres accepted the Baker plan while the PLO rejected it, Hawatimah said: Peres has not yet formed his government and has not declared his program. He expressed his belief Peres might propose new ideas that the PLO might have to study. In the event Peres succeeded in forming an Israeli Government and unconditionally accepts the Baker plan, the PLO then would immediately call for a PLO Central Council emergency session to discuss all these developments.

Asked whether convening the PLO Central Council depended on Israeli developments, Hawatimah said that, in January, the PLO had decided to call the PLO Central Council to convene in the Jordanian capital, Amman, in the first half of last February to discuss the progress of Palestinian developments since the Council's last session. Factors, which he described as administrative, however, prevented this from taking place since the Jordanian Government was busy preparing for the Arab Cooperation Council leaders' summit.

Al-Surani on Israeli Crisis, Peace Prospects

JN2303161890 Kuwait AL-ANBA' in Arabic
22 Mar 90 p 27

[Interview with PLO Executive Committee Member Jamal al-Surani by Sawsan Abu-Husayn in Cairo; date not given]

[Text] [Abu-Husayn] Now that the Jerusalem issue has toppled the Israeli Government and the Israeli Knesset has withdrawn confidence from its leader Yitzhaq Shamir, is there any hope of activating the peace process?

[Al-Surani] Shamir's fall and the withdrawal of confidence from the government do not mean much unless the replacement can draw up a new program to activate the peace process and can depart from Shamir's program that disregarded the Palestinian people's existence and their right to self-determination, to choose their own representatives, and to establish their state. In light of this, I am not concerned about events inside Israel, because Peres and Shamir always have worked together against Palestinian rights. They also have brought into Israel millions of Jews from the world, expanded settlements at the expense of Palestinian and Arab territory, and manufactured and developed nuclear arms and missiles through strategic cooperation with America. What peace and what settlement can Peres and Shamir launch? Two days ago, they announced they had developed anti-missile rockets after Iraq made an announcement on the multi-stage rockets. These, consequently, are not the intentions of people seeking peace. We wonder how we can feel secure from the peace of Israel that attacked Iraq and Tunisia and invaded Lebanon after signing the peace agreement with Egypt. Peace as we understand it is something living, dynamic, and a matter of coexistence; it is not a piece of paper kept in the archives.

[Abu-Husayn] If this is the case, what is the purpose of the Labor Party's slogan of land for peace?

[Al-Surani] If the principle of the Labor Party is land for peace, then that is good, and we welcome it. The Labor Party, however, believes Jerusalem is the eternal capital of Israel. The Labor Party believes Jerusalem is one-third of the West Bank, not the area occupied in 1967. Peres believes a settlement should be reached with the

citizens of Gaza and the rest of the West Bank; he ignores 5 million Palestinians and considers them Arab refugees. His view is the Arab countries must absorb those refugees, because Israel has nothing to do with them, saying it is an inter-Arab issue.

[Abu-Husayn] Withdrawing confidence from Shamir is a useful lesson to any new Shamir. Do you see it differently?

[Al-Surani] Withdrawing confidence from Shamir is a lesson for us to learn well about what America means to Israel and what it means when America says: I want a positive response to Baker's five points, and Shamir responds with procrastination and prevarication. This response has toppled Shamir. We, therefore, are fully confident if America tells Israel it must withdraw to the 1967 borders, this will be a fait accompli and Israel will do what America asks, because America supports Israel with everything from bread to nuclear weapons.

[Abu-Husayn] The new Israeli Government, therefore, will respond positively to Baker's five points?

[Al-Surani] The new Israeli Government certainly will say yes to Baker's five points; that is obvious.

[Abu-Husayn] Is this a sign of progress in the peace process?

[Al-Surani] The moves made by the parties to the conflict in the region cannot be called a peace process, but a settlement process. This is because peace cannot be established through the emigration of millions from the USSR at the expense of the Palestinian people's rights. We do not consider this emigration as much as a bargain struck among countries to transfer people from one place to another. Even the indications for a settlement, consequently, still are remote.

[Abu-Husayn] Do you believe the moves made by the parties to the conflict toward settlement will be frozen until the situation in Israel is decided?

[Al-Surani] Who said there has been any movement in the peace process to be frozen?

[Abu-Husayn] Was there a plan to conduct a tripartite meeting of the Egyptian, U.S., and Israeli foreign ministers and a bilateral Palestinian-Israeli meeting in Cairo?

[Al-Surani] This question will be postponed until the Israeli position has crystallized and an Israeli Government is formed, either by Shamir or Peres. Neither of them, however, may be able to form it. In that event, elections will be conducted. We should not forget, however, that Baker's arrangement for a settlement is insufficient in itself, because it does not support the establishment of a Palestinian state and the right to self-determination, although the U.S. Administration incorporated the principle of the right of nations to self-determination in international law after World War II.

[Abu-Husayn] Every political settlement usually is reached step by step, and Baker's five-point plan may be the beginning of the settlement. What do you think?

[Al-Surani] In our view, the situation has not changed. We have a Palestinian peace initiative approved by the Palestine National Council [PNC], adopted by the Arab summit conference, and which has become an Arab initiative. The whole world, except the United States and Israel, also has welcomed this Arab initiative. We, moreover, enjoy a great international and popular support, on which we will depend heavily in the future.

[Abu-Husayn] The PLO Executive Committee conducted a three-day meeting this month. What was the outcome of that meeting?

[Al-Surani] We approved several ideas, including a decision to conduct a preparatory meeting of the Central Council to form a new PNC, which will conduct a meeting in a few months to discuss developments since 15 November 1988. The new PNC will decide the next steps.

[Abu-Husayn] What are the topics to be discussed by the new PNC, which will meet immediately after its formation?

[Al-Surani] There are some major topics, foremost of which are backing, continuing, escalating, and developing the intifadah horizontally and vertically, as well as strengthening Arab cohesion, especially after the transfer of millions of Jews to Palestine. This will endanger neighboring Arab countries and will result in new wars, new refugees, settlements in Lebanese, Syrian, and Jordanian territories, and the establishment of the so-called alternative state. We in the PLO, therefore, are focusing on drawing up an Arab strategy to repulse the current danger and turn it into an Israeli illusion, especially since the region has lacked such a strategy since 1948. No Arab country has a strategy of its own, although drastic changes are taking place in East Europe and the Soviet Union—changes that will harm the Arab region if there is no effective Arab action. So, let us begin now and unify the Arab countries' will so we can do something. We otherwise will remain poor and divided small states affiliated to this or that bloc. Let the Arabs follow the examples of liberation and independence in Africa. Yesterday Namibia achieved independence.

[Abu-Husayn] It was reported recently that the PLO is looking for a place to conduct its meetings, especially after the transfer of the Arab League headquarters to Cairo. Is this true?

[Al-Surani] The Arab League headquarters is for all the Arabs, and the Palestine question is an Arab issue. The PLO is entitled to conduct its meetings wherever the Arab League headquarters is. Cairo is not closed to Palestinian meetings. Two months ago, and even before the decision to transfer the Arab League headquarters to Egypt, the Executive Committee met in Cairo. All past Palestinian meetings, moreover, were conducted in Cairo. We want Cairo to return to its past position, and we want to return there,

because all the Arab nation's meetings take place there. Why should all meetings on the Palestine question, therefore, not be conducted in Cairo?

[Abu-Husayn] What is the future of Egyptian-Palestinian coordination, especially since Israel, one of the parties to the conflict, is preoccupied in dissolving and forming a new government?

[Al-Surani] Egyptian-Palestinian coordination is continuing and will continue, because Egypt is a major supporter of the cause and a basic partner in the settlement process. We, moreover, share a common destiny, future, and life with Egypt. We coordinate positions and exchange views to agree on the best methods. Regarding Israel's current preoccupation with its crisis, it is not preoccupied, but is pretending to be. This in itself does not concern us much, because the facts cannot be ignored by Shamir, Peres, Sharon, or Levi. These facts are: The Palestinian people exist, racism is rejected, and America will not continue to reject the Palestinian people's rights forever, especially since a more advanced European stance has been expressed in more than one statement, beginning with the Venice declaration and ending with the recent Madrid declaration. Everyone is in favor of self-determination for the Palestinian people, the PLO's participation in any meeting related to the Palestine question, and the convocation of an international conference.

[Abu-Husayn] What about Palestinian-Syrian coordination?

[Al-Surani] We are looking forward not only to a Syrian-Palestinian coordination, but also to overall Arab-Palestinian coordination. As I said at the beginning, we want an integrated Arab strategy on which all Arabs agree and in which secondary differences disappear, because we face far greater dangers than differences. We hope all parties will act in solidarity with us and rally around this strategy with us.

PFLP 'Not To Use' Jordan for Attacks on Israel

JN2403092990 Kuwait AL-WATAN in Arabic 22 Mar 90 p 1

[Text] Amman—AL-WATAN has learned the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] has pledged to the Jordanian Government not to use Jordanian territory as a base to launch operations against the Israeli enemy, so Israel won't have an excuse to carry out aggressive acts against Jordan. This step was taken by the PFLP, which—among the Palestinian factions—has adopted the most extremist stand on the Jordanian policy during the years following the September 1970 incidents. The step came as a sign of good intentions in the wake of the first meeting in 20 years between Jordanian officials and PFLP leaders. The meeting took place [on 19 March] between Jordan's Prime Minister Mudar Badran and PFLP leaders Taysir Qubba'ah and 'Azmi al-Khawaja, members of the PFLP Political Bureau.

It also was learned the PFLP pledged not to interfere in Jordan's internal affairs, and that the PFLP has no intention of forming a political party in Jordan similar to the party formed by the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. This took place in the wake of reassurances given to the PFLP delegation by the Jordanian prime minister, who stated Jordan's desire to open a new chapter in relations with all Palestinian revolutionary forces.

Egypt

Mubarak-al-Asad Meeting in Tubruq Viewed

NC2503083090 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0710 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Cairo, 25 Mar (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has stressed that the Arab nation is at present in dire need of strong solidarity and united thinking in order to be able to confront the world economic blocs. Mubarak made this statement before leaving for Cairo from the Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir base, where he, Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, and Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, chairman of the Sudanese Revolution Command Council, participated with their brother leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, leader of the Libyan Revolution, in Libya's celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the evacuation of the British forces.

Col. al-Qadhdhafi stressed the need to discard the negative aspects of the past, saying: "Our deeds will prove that we are working in the interest of the Arab nation." President Hafiz al-Asad said that the time is ripe to convene an immediate Arab summit. Lt. Gen. al-Bashir stated that the Arabs are in great need of unity at a time when the whole world is moving toward unity.

President Mubarak returned to Cairo at 0145 this morning along with his accompanying delegation, which included Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister; Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs; Dr. Zakariya 'Azmi, head of the President's Office; Dr. Yusuf Wali, deputy prime minister and minister of agriculture and land reclamation; Safwat al-Sharif, information minister; Dr. Ahmad Salamah, minister of state for People's Assembly and Consultative Council Affairs; and Dr. Ahmad al-Razzaz, finance minister.

MENA has learned that, during their one-hour meeting in Tubruq yesterday, President Mubarak and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad agreed to continue their consultations on setting a date for a meeting between them after the month of Ramadan. MENA has also learned that the two leaders paid special attention to ways of strengthening bilateral ties between Egypt and Syria.

Mubarak Returns From Libya Summit

NC2503061090 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 0500 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] President Husni Mubarak and the delegation accompanying him returned home safely early this morning after participating in Libya's celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the British forces' evacuation from the Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir base in Tubruq. President Mubarak left the Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir base at 0100. Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, leader of the Libyan revolution, led the delegation that saw him off.

President Mubarak, Col. al-Qadhdhafi, Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, and Sudanese Revolution Command Council Chairman 'Umar al-Bashir had met earlier. At the Libyan leader's home in Tubruq yesterday evening, they discussed the important developments facing the Arab nation and issues related to joint Arab action. They also examined the possibility of convening an Arab summit to discuss the challenges confronting the Arab nation at present. After the meeting, Col. al-Qadhdhafi hosted a banquet in honor of the three leaders.

Summit in Libya Termed 'Positive'

NC2503065690 Cairo Domestic Service in Arabic 0500 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Dispatch by Cairo Radio correspondent Ahmad al-Razzaz from Tubruq—recorded]

[Text] For the first time, President Husni Mubarak, Hafiz al-Asad, 'Umar al-Bashir, and Colonel al-Qadhdhafi held a quadripartite summit in Tubruq in Libya. The four Arab leaders were at the Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir base to participate in Libya's celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the British forces' evacuation from the al-'Azm base, later renamed the Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir base.

The statements made by Presidents Mubarak, al-Qadhdhafi, and al-Asad accurately expressed the Arab people's feeling at this important stage through which the Arab nation is passing. The meeting stressed the need for the Arabs to cooperate, forget their differences, and, as Col. al-Qadhdhafi underlined in his speech, emphasize the lesson learned from the past era: that is, that radio wars were useless and had given the Arab nation nothing. There is currently a common Arab approach and attitude to Arab problems.

Syrian President al-Asad did not rule out the possibility of convening an Arab summit to address international developments. President al-Asad stressed that most Arab leaders agree to the convening of a summit, while Mubarak emphasized that all Arab leaders agree to this.

At the quadripartite meeting in Col. al-Qadhdhafhi's home in Tubruq, the four leaders discussed the problems facing the Arab nation. [words indistinct] (?Jewish emigration) and the danger it poses to the Palestinian issue, the Lebanese problem, the international challenges facing Libya, issues related to the expansion of the conflict in southern Sudan, and the need to address it peacefully. 'Umar al-Bashir and Mubarak stressed that the problem must be solved peacefully through negotiations and that a military solution must be totally excluded.

We can say that this important meeting was positive and brought Arab leaders closer to embarking on Arab action to confront the major challenges obstructing Arab efforts. The Libyan media and all correspondents here attach great importance to this meeting. The meeting in itself is considered a starting-point for Arab action to complete other Arab efforts being launched by the Arab Cooperation Council, the Arab Maghreb Union, and the Gulf Cooperation Council

within the framework of the Arab League. Arab leaders Mubarak, al-Asad, al-Bashir, and al-Qadhdhafi emphasized their call for an Arab summit to confront all challenges. This in itself is a healthy sign of the Arab leaders' approach at this delicate stage.

USSR Envoy Briefs Minister on Consultations

JN2403153890 Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 22 Mar 90 p 1

[Text] Soviet Ambassador in Cairo Gennadiy Zhuravlev has stated that he carries a message from Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to President Husni Mubarak dealing with the latest developments in the region and with relations between the two countries.

Following his talks yesterday with Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister, the ambassador reported that he had informed the minister of the outcome of his consultations in Moscow and of the recent developments and changes there in the direction of democracy and a multi-party system.

Prime Minister Sidqi Leaves for Sanaa

NC2403081290 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0730 GMT 24 Mar 90

[Excerpt] Cairo, 24 Mar (MENA)—Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi left Cairo for Sanaa today to attend meetings of the Joint Higher Egyptian-Yemeni Committee for two days.

Dr. Sidqi is accompanied by a delegation comprising Sulayman Mutawalli, minister of transport, communications, and maritime transport; Mahir Abazah, minister of electricity and energy; Minister of Industry Muhammad 'Abd-al-Wahhab; Minister of Education Dr. Ahmad Fathi Surur; and Dr. Yusri Mustafa, minister of economy and foreign trade. [passage omitted]

Butrus Ghali Leaves for Paris, Geneva

NC2503165990 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1618 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Cairo, 25 Mar (MENA)—Dr. Butrus Ghali, minister of state for foreign affairs, left Cairo for Paris this afternoon. He will later go to Geneva for a four-day visit.

In a departure statement, Dr. Ghali said that he will hold talks dealing with the OAU's sphere of activities with French Foreign Ministry officials in Paris. He added that he will hold talks in Geneva with the UN high commissioner for refugees and the WHO director-general. These talks will deal with their activities in Africa during Egypt's chairmanship of the OAU.

Libya

Planned U.S. Maneuvers Said To Endanger Air Routes

LD2303210690 Tripoli Television Service in Arabic 2000 GMT 23 Mar 90

[Text] The military maneuvers which the U.S. Sixth Fleet will carry out in the period 26-27 March 1990, in the middle of the Mediterranean basin, in a region which includes the Tripoli aviation information zone, includes international air routes B21 and W856B, which are in close proximity to other international air routes W859B and R2.

The Great Jamahiriyah refuses responsibility for what may happen to air traffic in the mentioned zone, and considers the zone closed. As a country of the region, it warns that in the event these maneuvers are continued, and in the declared area, air traffic in this region and the movement of people and goods will undoubtedly be affected.

Out of our eagerness for air safety in line with the accepted international regulations and systems, this warning has been issued so that the consequences of these maneuvers will become clear to all the states of the region.

[Signed] The General Authority for Civil Aviation and Meteorology

Air Traffic Affected by 6th Fleet

LD2403150590 Tripoli JANA in English 1428 GMT 14 Mar 90

[Text] Tripoli, al Rabi' [March] 24, JAMAHIRYA NEWS AGENCY—As a result of the military [word indistinct] conducted by the American Sixth Fleet on 26 and 27/3/1990 in the Mediterranean in an area which includes the Tripoli aviation data domain and became clear that they will penetrate international air corridors/B 26 and W 856 D/ situated very close to other international air corridors/W 859 and R2/Great Jamahirya shall relinquish its responsibility on the effects of this on air traffic in the afore said corridors and consider them closed.

Great Jamahiriya, being one of the states of this area, warns that if such exercises went ahead at the declared areas, air traffic in the area and movement of persons and goods will, undoubtedly, be affected.

Considering our keen interest in guaranteeing air safety and in accordance with internationally recognized regimes and regulations, this warning was issued so that the results of these exercises are clear to all the states of the area.

[Signed] The General Authority of Civilian Aviation and Weather Forecasts

6th Fleet Maneuvers Pose 'Danger'

LD2603123390 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1155 GMT 26 Mar 90

[Text] Tripoli, 26 Mar (JANA)—The U.S. 6th Fleet today began maneuvers in the Mediterranean sea in an area including the Tripoli aviation flight information zone, a zone that clearly crosses the international flight corridors B21 and W856D, and is located very close to other international flight corridors. Because of this, aircraft and ship crossings of these corridors has been stopped due to the danger represented by the U.S. maneuvers in this area.

Libya does not assume any responsibility regarding this danger, and cannot offer any assistance.

Arab Leaders Attend Celebration in Tubruq

Egypt's Mubarak Arrives

LD2403202990 Tripoli JANA in English 1826 GMT 24 Mar 90

[Text] Tubruq, al Rabi' [March] 24, JAMAHIRIYA NEWS AGENCY—The president of the Arab Republic of Egypt Muhammad Husni Mubarak arrived this morning at the air base "Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir" to attend the festivities of the Libyan Arab people celebrating the 20th anniversary of the eviction of the British military bases from the Libyan Arab territory.

Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, the leader of the Great al-Fatah revolution, headed the welcoming ceremony which was mounted for President Husni Mubarak. Also taking part in the official and popular welcoming cermony were Staff Major 'Abd-al-Salam Ahmad Jallud, the secretary and members of the General People's Congress, the secretary and members of the General People's Committee, officers of the armed people and members of diplomatic missions accredited to Great Jamahiriya.

The masses welcoming the three presidents al-Bashir, al-Asad and Mubarak reaffirmed, in their chanting, the importance and necessity of total Arab unity from the ocean to the Gulf.

The Egyptian president is accompanied by 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, the deputy prime minister and foreign minister; Yusuf Wali, the deputy prime minister and minister of the agriculture; Muhammad al-Razzaz, the finance minister; Ahmad Sallama, the minister for the affairs of the people's council and shura; Safwat al-Sharif, the minister of the information; and 'Usama al-Baz, the first deputy of the foreign ministry and the director of the presidential office for political affairs.

Leaders Hold News Conference

LD2403112590 Tripoli Television Service in Arabic 1002 GMT 24 Mar 90

[Impromptu news conference from live relay of air display at Tubruq airport, with Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, President Husni Mubarak of Egypt, and President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria]

[Text] [Unidentified reporter's question indistinct]

[Mubarak] One should look at today's shape of the world. Today's world includes a number of groupings, economic groupings. Look at the United States, look at Europe after 1992, and look at East Europe and the developments which have taken place there, in addition to the Soviet Union. We, in the Arab nation, need some kind of a strong solidarity and unity of thinking in order to have a unified entity in the face of these groupings. I hope, God willing, that thanks to today's leaders of the Arab nation we will achieve this.

[Reporter] President al-Asad, do you see a need for the convening of an summit to examine the developments on the Arab scene [words indistinct]?

[al-Asad] Life must go on. And joint Arab action must go on. Of course, we always like to organize our collective action through collective meetings. I think this is the desire of most Arab leaders, if not all Arab leaders. [words indistinct]

[al-Qadhdhafi] I am very proud of my brothers. Every Libyan, male and female, feel today [words indistinct] a matter which indicate that the Arab land is one land and therefore its freedom is indivisible. Here are our brothers from Egypt, Syria, and Sudan celebrating with us the anniversary of the liberation of this piece of land which is very dear to you all, the Tubruq and Jamal Abd al-Nasir air base which were used once to launch an aggression against Egypt. [words indistinct] And since it has been liberated it has become a base to defend Egypt and Libya. And today is still a base to defend Egypt and Libya and the Arab homeland as a whole.

Al-Asad on Arab Unity, Armed Struggle

JN2403175290 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1615 GMT 24 Mar 90

[Excerpts] Tubruq—His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad has arrived in Tubruq in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah to participate in the celebrations of our Libyan Arab people to mark the 20th anniversary of the evacuation of British troops and bases from Libyan land and the founding of the Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir base. [passage omitted]

After a short rest, President Hafiz al-Asad answered reporters' questions. The president asked: What occupation has ever been removed by prayer and what usurped land retrieved by pleas [to God]? Each people whose land has been occupied must struggle with all means, and armed struggle is the foremost of these means. We are

now in a location of the Arab Libyan land that attests to this fact. The Libyan Arab people's long struggle and blood managed to retrieve usurped lands and dignity over a period of time and they now live in their own homeland free, sovereign, and independent.

The president said that the same law applies to every part of the Arab land; in fact, to every part of the world.

To a question, the president replied: I, as an Arab citizen, believe that without unity, we Arabs can have no happy life. Historical development steadily and increasingly requires of us that we exert more solid and serious efforts toward Arab unity. We are one nation, and it is only natural that we become one entity, especially when we see other nations. They are diverse nations, in my definition of the word, and not one nation on its way to a united entity; they are nations that are not small and they are developed nations. What about us—the unified nation—whose weaknesses in various aspects are enough to impel us further toward unity. If we do not move toward unity, the future of the nation is in danger even in its farthest reaches. This does not mean that we are pessimistic. We should be optimistic and accompany this optimism with action.

The president added: We must unite. We must preserve our dignity, pride, lands, and independence. We shall triumph in our battles with our enemy with God's help. [passage omitted]

Sudan's Al-Bashir Urges Arab Unity

EA2503162990 Khartoum SUNA in English 1005 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Tubruq, Libya, 25 March (SUNA)—Revolution Command Council Chairman General 'Umar al-Bashir has said the Arab unity is strongly needed at a time when all the world is heading towards unity.

Al-Bashir made the statement upon arrival here to participate in the celebrations marking the withdrawal of colonial forces from this Libyan city, which lies at the Mediterranean sea's coast.

In his statement, Al-Bashir firmly called for a comprehensive unity, affirming that the Arab nation is [word indistinct]. Gen al-Bashir expressed hope that the Arab leaders' efforts for unity would be successful, and hailed the Libyan leader M'uammar al-Qadhdhafi's efforts in this regard.

Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, who arrived here yesterday to take part in the occasion, told a press conference upon arrival that much efforts are needed than ever before towards coordination and integration. He said the Arab nation is in need of unity to prove its [word indistinct] among all the various blocs of the world.

Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, who is here also to attend the celebrations, called for the convocation of an emergency Arab conference to tackle the current development in the Arab arena, noting that Arab action must not be halted, as this is the desire of all the Arab people.

President al-Qadhdhafi thanked the three leaders for their participation in the celebrations.

Mubarak Departs

LD2503083490 Tripoli Voice of Greater Arab Homeland in Arabic 0215 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Excerpt] President Husni Mubarak, president of the Arab Republic of Egypt, left Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir air base in Tubruq last night after having taken part in the Libyan Arab people's celebration marking the 20th pan-Arab anniversary of the eviction of the British military forces and bases from the Libyan Arab land. The brother leader of the revolution led those who saw off President Mubarak and his accompanying delegation. [passage omitted]

Al-Asad Comments on Talks

JN2603081190 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0515 GMT 26 Mar 90

[Text] President Hafiz al-Asad has asserted that his talks with Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, as always, were fraternal and sought the general interests of the Arab nation. Answering journalists' questions before leaving Tubruq for home yesterday, President al-Asad noted that his talks with Col. al-Qadhdhafi dealt with ways to keep the Arab nation away from dangers inasmuch as it is undergoing a stage that requires cooperation, solidarity, and the mobilization of forces. The reason is that recent world developments are of great magnitude; they might pose the greatest dangers to the Arab nation if this nation does not look at itself and close the gaps.

The president said: We were in full agreement in these talks on what should be done be it by Syria or Libya or by our other brothers in Egypt and Sudan. We, the four leaders, reached understanding on what should be done. Undoubtedly, what we thought about was in the interest of the Arab nation.

On the unity feelings inspired by the celebration held at Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir Air Base in Tubruq, President Hafiz al-Asad said: unity is destiny. This is what we said and what we always say. We believe that there is a significance in our coming from Syria, Libya, Egypt, and Sudan because of the importance of this base. As one of the brother leaders who met yesterday, I felt the high significance and militant dimensions of the slogans raised by the masses, as well as of the significance of the aerial show and the celebration arrangements.

The president stressed that the celebration held at the base was a symbol of a very important thing: it demonstrated the victory of the Libyan Arab people over the arrogant colonialist forces that attempted to tear up this country, to impose its colonialism, and to perpetuate this colonialism and fragmentation of the country, ignoring

the people's creative forces which ebb sometimes and explode at other times. However, the dear and friendly Libyan people were always present; their forces have increasingly exploded in the face of these colonialist forces. Thus, these forces became incapable of implementing their design against the Arab land.

His excellency added: Therefore, we participated with the Libyan Arab people in the celebration of an important Arab victory. As it calls for satisfaction and joy because the liberation and regaining of a base is not only a Libyan victory, but also an Arab one, this victory also calls for optimism in the future and in the ability of our people, our Libyan Arab masses, and our masses in the other Arab states to achieve pride and victory.

Libyan Arab Television extensively highlighted the visit to Libya by President Hafiz al-Asad, particularly the meeting held yesterday with Col. al-Qadhdhafi, leader of the 1 September revolution. Libyan Television broadcast in its main newscast last night the recording of the important press statement made by the president before he and his delegation left the Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir Air Base in Tubruq yesterday.

Aircraft Squadron Presented to Egypt

LD2403203390 Tripoli JANA in English 1830 GMT 24 Mar 90

[Text] Tubruq, al Rabi' [March] 24, JAMAHIRIYA NEWS AGENCY—The leader of the revolution this afternoon decorated the Egyptian and Syrian Arab air eagles, who took part this morning in the massive air parade at "Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir" air base, with the great al-Fatih order. Also the leader of the revolution presented a squadron of aircraft from the Libyan Arab Airforce as a gift to the Egyptian Arab Airforce.

Al-Qadhdhafi Reportedly Telephones King Husayn

LD2603131890 Algiers Domestic Service in Arabic 1200 GMT 26 Mar 90

[Text] Yesterday Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi contacted King Husayn of Jordan by telephone. It is worth noting that Libyan-Jordanian relations were broken in 1984 when the Jordanian Embassy in Tripoli was set on fire.

General People's Congress To Convene 27 Mar

LD2503215690 Tripoli Television Service in Arabic 2000 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] The secretariat of the General People's Congress has released a decision calling on the General People's Congress to convene. Here is the text of the call:

After perusing Law No. 9 of 1984 organizing the people's congresses, and the general motion of the people's congresses, the secretariat has decided:

1. The General People's Congress is invited to hold an extraordinary session to formulate the decisions of the basic people's congresses taken during their first extraordinary session for 1399 from the death of the prophet, corresponding to 1990 a.d. on Tuesday 30 Sha'ban 1399 after the death of the Prophet, corresponding to 27 March 1990, at the People's Hall, in Tripoli at 0900.

Al-Qadhdhafi Speaks at Arab, African Conference

LD2103222290 Tripoli JANA in English 1735 GMT 21 Mar 90

[Text] Al-Bayan al-Awal, al-Rabi' [March] 21, JAMAHIRIYAH NEWS AGENCY—The leader of the revolution attended this morning the opening session of the International Conference on Arab and African family in al-Bayan al-Awal city of Banghazi.

The leader addressed the opening session starting with saluting the people of Namibia which had achieved its independence on this day the 21 al-Rabie saying "on such a day one of the people's of the earth is being liberated from colonialism and racism."

In his speech, the leader talked about many matters and problems facing the family in the contemporary societies. He explained that the broken family phenomenon and that of deliquency are the problem of the era and that the Green Book had presented analyses for such social phenomena...

He said "We must all work to alleviate them and control them as much as possible."

More on Al-Qadhdhafi Address

LD2103230890

[Editorial report] Tripoli Television Service in Arabic at 2044 GMT on 21 March begins carrying a recorded speech by Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi to the opening session of the International Conference on the Arab and African Family taking place in al-Bayan al-Awal in Banghazi.

Al-Qadhdhafi begins his speech by dwelling on the importance of the society of the masses such as in Libya, where the people are their own master. He states that the whole world should follow in the steps of Libya if it wants peace, stability, and justice.

Al-Qadhdhafi believes that the family nucleus in the world is falling apart because of social and material reasons. He says one should pay more attention and care to the upbringing of children because they are the ones who form the foundation of any family.

He notes that the disintegrating state of the family worldwide cannot be remedied, because this is a sign of modern times. He attacks U.S. "imperialist" and "racist" attitudes toward blacks, American Indians, minorities, and Arabs who live in the United States. There is no peace, no tranquillity, and no prosperity in

the United States, al-Qadhdhafi says. The "revolutionary peoples" will continue to support oppressed minorities and peoples, wherever they may be.

Al-Qadhdhafi goes on to say that because a woman finds herself forced to go out to look for work, a child is left at home with a babysitter or sent to a nursery and that this is not the right way to raise children. He describes families who send their children to nurseries or employ babysitters as commiting a crime against their children. He calls for the abolition of nurseries as well as infant schools and babysitters because children should be brought up and educated by their mother and father.

Family disunity is like a virus in that one cannot cure it but one can follow its development, al-Qadhdhafi notes. He compares this to the AIDS virus, which has no cure, and says that he believes that this virus was invented by the CIA. The Libyan ruler calls on people not to compete over material things such as clothes, cars, and houses and to pay attention instead to morals and ethics. Al-Qadhdhafi states that the cultural revolution starts by abolishing nurseries and services that play the role of babysitter because a mother can teach a child his or her culture, heritage, and the history of their ancestors.

Islamic Leadership Secretariat Holds First Meeting

LD2203235790 Tripoli Domestic Service in Arabic 1700 GMT 22 Mar 90

[Text] The General Secretariat of the International Islamic People's Leadership [IIPL] held its first meeting in Tripoli this morning. The meeting was an opportunity to brief members of the secretariat on the [IIPL's] charter, principles, and aims and to stress the need for contacts with various organizations and carry out necessary studies for this purpose. The studies should, however, be gathered and brought before the next meeting in order to be made available for everyone.

The meeting was also an opportunity to add five more members to the IIPL General Secretariat, to choose members of the Executive Bureau, and to exchange viewpoints on a number of topics and issues of concern to the General Secretariat's activities and structure as well to draft a strategy for such activities and to pay attention to activities in various regions. Furthermore, the date of the next meeting of the General Secretariat was left open but it should be held within the next six months. It was left for the general secretary and the Executive Bureau to arrange it.

Sudan

Al-Bashir Returns From Libyan Celebrations

EA2503220890 Omdurman Domestic Service in Arabic 1930 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Summary from poor reception] Revolution Command Council Chairman Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir has returned to the country today after attending celebrations in Libya marking the 20th anniversary of the evacuation of British troops from that country.

RCC Members Address Libya Integration Conference

EA2503181590 Omdurman Domestic Service in Arabic 1930 GMT 24 Mar 90

[Excerpts] This morning, Major General al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih, Revolution Command Council [RCC] deputy chairman, addressed the opening session of the popular forces conference for integration between Sudan and the Libyan Jamahiriyah. The session was also addressed by Brigadier 'Uthman Ahmad Hasan, RCC member and chairman of the political committee.

Brig. Hasan said: We meet within the framework of the dialogue on an important issue which affects all citizens. He said that the unity of the Arab nation is the will of the masses, from the ocean to the Gulf. It is the goal of a long struggle, which has been the [word indistinct] of this nation for liberation. [passage omitted]

Brig. 'Uthman Ahmad Hasan stressed that the present time in the world is a time for the cohesion of peoples and larger entities. He stressed that the Arab nation is a big nation. He stressed that the integration scheme would take into account all previous successes or failures. [passage omitted]

Libyan Armed Forces Chief Arrives 25 Mar

EA2503221890 Omdurman Domestic Service in Arabic 1930 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Summary from poor reception] This evening, Brigadier Abu Bakr Yunis, member of the historic leadership of the 1 September Revolution, minister of defense [as heard], and commander in chief of the Libyan Armed Forces, arrived in Sudan heading a delegation to attend the conference of the popular forces on integration between Sudan and Libya.

Hundreds of Kurds Return in Response to Amnesty

JN2503215490 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 2100 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] In response to President leader Saddam Husayn's general amnesty granted to Iraqi Kurds who fled from Iraq, hundreds of Kurds have returned to the homeland, taking advantage of leader Saddam Husayn's generous gesture. The returnees, who number 312 today, expressed their deep joy and gratitude to the Ba'th Party and the revolution led by the hero of victory and peace, President leader Saddam Husayn, for giving them the opportunity to begin a new life among the sons of their Iraqi people.

In statements to INA correspondents in the Kurdistan autonomous region governorates, the returnees pledged to exert their utmost efforts to contribute to building great Iraq. They also stressed their continued readiness to make every sacrifice to defend Iraq so it remains lofty and strong under the banner of our beloved leader President Husayn.

They said they had received President leader Husayn's generous gesture with joy and beseeched God Almighty to protect his excellency and grant him long life to lead Iraq from victory to victory. Hundreds of returnees chanted gratitude and thanks to his excellency for granting them this new opportunity and for taking care of the sons of the Iraqi people. They also referred to the free and honorable life provided to their families, which had been provided with housing, foodstuffs, medical supplies, and other services.

Further Reaction to Execution of 'Spy' Bazroft

UN Mission Issues Statement

JN2203202790 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1957 GMT 22 Mar 90

[Text] United Nations, 22 Mar (INA)—The Iraqi mission at the United Nations has stressed that Iraq will not submit to any form of media or political threats or to blackmail. In a statement issued here today, the mission said that Iraq will not allow anyone to prevent it from exercising its right to defend its national security against aggression and acts of espionage. The mission added that the hostile British campaign against Iraq constitutes an interference in its domestic affairs, and an attempt by Britain to revive its colonialist past. The Iraqi mission stressed that by executing Bazoft, Iraq had exercised its national rights. It said that Bazoft had admitted his spying against Iraq for the Israeli enemy. The mission added that in his hand-written confessions in English, Bazoft confessed these acts and confirmed his confession during the trial, which was attended by the British consul in Baghdad. The mission said that once again, Britain proves its outworn colonialist mentality, and still imagines that all free peoples in the world should submit to its orders.

Envoy to U.S. Comments

JN2303200190 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1847 GMT 23 Mar 90

[Text] Washington, 23 Mar (INA)—Dr. Muhammad al-Mashshat, Iraqi ambassador to the United States, has stated Iraq was exercising its right to protect its national security when it executed the Iranian who was proven a spy. In a news statement distributed to members of Congress and the U.S. media here, he said Bazoft was traveling with British documents under the guise of a journalist working for THE OBSERVER, and he intentionally violated Iraqi laws when he gathered information on a restricted military area in cooperation with a British nurse. Dr. al-Mashshat noted Bazoft was arrested while trying to leave the country carrying with him pieces of the evidence and information he had gathered in his espionage activity. He said Bazoft and the British nurse had a fair trial in the presence of the British consul and a lawyer chosen by the British Embassy.

Dr. al-Mashshat noted Bazoft used methods unconnected with journalism that violated the journalistic freedom by gathering information related to espionage, not journalism. Ambassador al-Mashshat said Bazoft openly confessed he was seeking information on Iraqi military installations required from him by the Israeli Mosad. He added Iraq clearly acted according to the Geneva Convention in this respect and exercised its right to implement the court's decision to execute Bazoft.

Dr. al-Mashshat stressed Britain's recall of its ambassador to Baghdad and the expulsion of Iraqi students will not force Iraq to relinquish its right to protect its national sovereignty. He added Britain made no protest during the trial, which was attended by its consul in Baghdad. He speculated on the motives of the British Government to defend the activities of Bazoft despite his confession he worked for the Israeli Mosad and that he visited Iraq on behalf of the Mosad, and was not on a journalist's mission.

Ministry Official Comments

NC2503143890 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1330 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Cairo, 25 Mar (MENA)—Salah Mukhtar, official in charge of external information at the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, has stated the capture of the British spy who recently was executed in Iraq proves several parties are attempting to penetrate Iraqi national security and subsquently pan-Arab security. He added this is an issue that concerns the whole Arab nation, not only Iraq. In a statement to MENA, the Iraqi official said the British media campaign against Iraq constitutes an intervention in Iraq's internal affairs. He said the spy made a written confession, and furthermore, there was definite proof of his guilt. He said this eventually made British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher confine her request to asking that his sentence be commuted.

Peres Uncertain He Can Form Government by 28 Mar

TA2403103490 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 0805 GMT 24 Mar 90

[Interview with Shim'on Peres, Knesset member and Labor Party leader, by political correspondent Arye Golan "this week"; place not given—recorded]

[Excerpt] [Golan] Mr. Peres, what did you think about when you received the telephone call from the president?

[Peres] The difficulties ahead of me.

[Golan] Did you envision the difficulties with SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim]?

[Peres] The difficulties were both expected and unexpected. I took into account the possibility unexpected things would take place.

[Golan] How do you explain the shift that Rabbi 'Ovadya Yosef and Minister Arye Der'i were forced to make?

[Peres] We must remember we have two parallel moves here. One is to form a government, the other is the setup of the religious parties. For example, there is no doubt Minister Peretz' resignation had repercussions on the internal situation in SHAS. So this means unexpected things happen as well, not necessarily directly linked to the peace process, rather as a result of it, bearing some influence on it, and so on.

[Golan] Do these unexpected things that happen still give you grounds to believe you can form a new government by next Wednesday [28 March], when the Knesset goes into recess?

[Peres] I do not know. I do not know if it is possible. The president allocated 21 days for this purpose with good reason. I have learned from my predecessors. Forming a government is, after all, a very complex process. We, furthermore, are dealing with the very complicated Israeli political map. In general, in the two or three days that we were active, we also encountered pleasant surprises, not just unpleasant ones. For example, the fact we can reach a common religious camp; or that we can form a joint political camp. This part went better and faster than I anticipated. There is a rapprochement, and it can be further extended, between the secular and the religious camps on both these issues. I must state both sides have expressed surprise at the degree of understanding already reached.

[Golan] Still, do you feel that because of this political map you mentioned, you might need the full 21 days allocated by the president?

[Peres] Look, I do not engage in guesses or dates. We will work all the time and see.

[Golan] At the same time, you must have heard the Likud declarations that it has a blocking coalition of 60 Knesset members.

[Peres] They may claim what they like. This is not put to any test of arithmetic. Inside the Likud 60 there are, for example, five members of the National Religious Party who have declared they will join no narrow-based government whether it is led by the Likud or the Alignment. I did not hear that SHAS and Degel Hatora have made a final decision about their position. That is why these numbers are for public relations purposes only and have no part in reality.

[Golan] Does that mean SHAS eventually may abstain when you present your new government, and not vote against it?

[Peres] I do not want to make prophecies. I am doing my best to win SHAS and Degel Hatora support. I did not give up. I am familiar with the moves. For example, on the eve of the no-confidence vote, no one could tell SHAS would abstain. This was a surprise, and more definitely are expected. [passage omitted]

Likud Would Join Government if Rabin Led Labor

TA2503112890 Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 25 Mar 90 p 4

[By Ilan Kfir]

[Excerpt] Senior Likud sources would accept a rotation of the premiership with the Alignment were Yitzhaq Rabin to lead it. Likud ministers yesterday said in closed forums that, if such a proposition were offered, the Likud-Alignment partnership in a national unity government could be resumed at once.

At the Likud ministerial forum on Saturday, one week ago [17 March], a draft proposal was formulated that stipulated the Likud would not participate in a government headed by Peres, and the wording of the proposal was only changed in the final stage to a general rejection of any participation in an Alignment-led government. [passage omitted]

Agudat Yisra'el Lists Terms for Joining Labor

TA2503152290 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 25 Mar 90 p A7

[By Menahem Rahat]

[Excerpt] Agudat Yisra'el late last week warned the Alignment against deluding itself it would join a narrow coalition based on a non-Jewish majority in the Knesset. It demands Peres' government, in which it will be a partner, will enjoy a majority of Jewish support.

The import of the demand is the Alignment now will have to seek at least three deserters from the Likud's 60-member-strong bloc. One or two deserters will not satisfy Agudat Yisra'el, because if in the calculation the five Arab Knesset members [MK's] are subtracted, the Alignment has the support of 55 MK's, while the Likud enjoys the support of 60. The desertion of three Likud supporting MK's to the Alignment's camp would allow

the Alignment to present a Cabinet that will enjoy the confidence of 58 Jewish MK's, while the Likud's camp (including SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] and Degel Hatora) will number only 57 MK's. Clearly the five Arab MK's also will join in support of the Alignment in the vote, so that such a government, with the added strength of three deserters, could enjoy the support of a total of 63 MK's.

Agudat Yisra'el meanwhile has been doing some "rethinking," with a growing number of its followers calling on the party to leave the Alignment bloc. Agudat Yisra'el sources have said if the Alignment fails to present a Cabinet within the 21 days given to Peres, Agudat Yisra'el will return the mandate to the Council of Torah Sages and that body, in turn, may decide to go back to the Likud's fold—albeit on the condition Shamir be replaced.

Agudat Yisra'el late last week was forced to encounter some of its supporters who are furious with it for joining the Alignment. Against this backdrop, Agudat Yisra'el issued an official statement, protesting "the besmirching of Agudat Yisra'el by all sorts of bizarre libels," and explained: "None of Agudat Yisra'el's commitments include readiness to cede any part of Eretz Yisra'el. If and when these questions become topical, God forbid, Agudat Yisra'el's top institutions will address the matter according to the opinion of Israel's sages and wise men, in whose warmth the Agudat Yisra'el members bask." [passage omitted]

Rabin: Coalition Chances 'Less Likely Today'

TA2503202490 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 2000 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Knesset Member Yitzhaq Rabin says unfortunately a bitter residue of mistrust have been collecting both in the Likud and the Labor Party, and they are hard to overcome. The option of a unity government, which seemed reasonable just a few days ago, therefore appears less likely today.

Addressing a group of Likud supporters in Herzliyya, Rabin pointed out the two large parties are incapable of declaring a change in the electoral system because the moment one of them does so, the religious parties will rush to the other. He claims it is unreasonable the Labor Party would rely on a coalition that depends on the Arab factions' votes, because in his opinion, more than just one partner of the Labor Party would object to that.

Mr. Rabin's remarks were reported by our correspondent, Sheli Yehimovitch.

Shamir To Replace Inner Cabinet With Committees

TA2603112690 Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew 26 Mar 90 pp 1, 4

[By Moti Bassok]

[Excerpts] Yitzhaq Shamir, who currently is serving as both prime minister and defense minister, intends to follow in the footsteps of Menahem Begin when he held both posts and, beginning next week, he will devote each Thursday to managing the defense establishment and the IDF [Israel Defense Forces].

Shamir already has notified the relevant bodies he will devote next Thursday morning to the defense system. He will arrive for a series of meetings with IDF and Defense Ministry chiefs at their headquarters and the defense minister's bureau in Tel Aviv. In the meetings, the prime minister will determine the working procedures and the delegation of authority for the time he holds the Defense Ministry portfolio. [passage omitted]

It also was learned the prime minister intends to change the working methods of the Cabinet. He will replace the now defunct Inner Cabinet by reviving the Ministerial Committee on Security Affairs and setting up another ministerial committee to deal with foreign affairs. Both committees will be small and will be headed by Shamir.

Envoy to Hungary Hopes Flights Will Resume

TA2503113590 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 25 Mar 90 p 1

[By David Makovsky, Herb Keinon, and news agencies]

[Excerpts] Soviet Jewish emigration is likely to be slowed as a result of a recent decision by Hungary's national airline, Malev, to cancel all flights from the Soviet Union to Israel via Budapest.

Malev has discontinued even its regularly scheduled flights to Israel, not just charters from Budapest, as was reported last week, THE JERUSALEM POST has learned. Malev and Aeroflot were the two carriers that brought Soviet Jews from the Soviet Union to Budapest.

Sources claim that Malev acted independently, taking advantage of a weak Hungarian government, and that once a new government is elected it will convince Malev to change its decision. The first round of elections is scheduled for today.

Israel's ambassador to Hungary, Shlomo Marom, who met with Hungarian Foreign Minister Gyula Horn, expressed hope that Malev's decision would be reversed after the elections. [passage omitted]

Meanwhile, Israel Radio last night reported that the number of weekly flights between Warsaw and Tel Aviv would double next week.

It quoted the director of El Al's office in Warsaw as saying that it reached an agreement with Poland's LOT airways to increase from two to four the number of flights weekly, with the possibility of adding more if needed.

Since the start of the year no Soviet Jews have flown via Warsaw, an El Al official in Warsaw said. [passage omitted]

Cabinet Discusses Absorption of Soviet Immigrants

TA2503115390 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1100 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir in the Cabinet session today rejected a proposal to make political negotiations with the Arabs conditional on their calling off their opposition to immigration to Israel. Our correspondent Avraham Ben-Melekh points out the proposal, raised by Minister Moda'i, was struck off the agenda by the prime minister.

This morning's Cabinet session was devoted to the issue of the absorption of Soviet immigrants. Immigrant Absorption Minister Yitzhaq Peretz cautioned about a serious shortage in rental apartments and in employment, which has been affecting immigrants. Minister Peretz said the moment is approaching when the reserves of rental apartments will be gone and a proper answer to the housing shortage has not yet been found. He called on the Construction Ministry to proceed in building thousands of apartments at once.

Minister Moda'i objected to a proposal made in the session to allocate a special budget for the absorption of immigrants, saying the Israeli public can be made to volunteer en masse.

The ministers also discussed the crisis concerning charter flights from Hungary. Yosef Govrin, the Foreign Ministry's assistant director general for East Europe affairs, left for Budapest this morning to discuss with Hungarian authorities Malev's decision to stop charter flights from the Soviet Union to Israel.

Cabinet Hears Reports on Jordan, Immigration

TA2503145190 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1400 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Jordan is continuing to take action to prevent infiltrations into Israel from its territory. This was reported today during a military briefing given to the Cabinet. Our political correspondent Arye Golan reports Jordan simultaneously is making efforts to improve its ties with the PLO. One of the reasons for improved Jordan-PLO relations is Amman's desire to forestall agitation among the Palestinians residing in Jordan.

Immigrant Absorption Minister Rabbi Peretz disclosed at today's Cabinet session that of the new immigrants who arrived from the Soviet Union during the last 12 months, only 26 percent were able to find a job. All the others still are considered unemployed. He added he may vote against the budget unless his ministry's allocation is amended.

The transportation minister expressed his conviction at the meeting that the Hungarian airline Malev would reverse its decision and resume charter flights that transport new immigrants to Israel. Minister Qatzav said this is the first time an airline has capitulated to terrorism.

[Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew at 1300 GMT on 25 March reports "Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir said at the session that the Cabinet takes a very grave view of Arab activity against aliyah from the USSR. In the Cabinet's view, this is an attempt to undermine the very existence of the state, and it will do everything in its power to fight against this activity."]

Mazowiecki Offers Warsaw as Emigration Point

TA2603052090 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 0400 GMT 26 Mar 90

[Text] Poland's prime minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, says his country is prepared to offer Warsaw as a transit stop for Soviet Jews emigrating to Israel. In a speech to Jewish leaders in New York, Mazowiecki said Warsaw could replace Budapest as the major route to Tel Aviv. Jonathan Shachter reports:

[Begin recording] [Shachter] Speaking to the American Jewish Congress, the prime minister reviewed the past two centuries of Jewish history in Poland. He recounted the stark reality of what took place during the Holocaust, saying that while many Poles tried to save Jewish families and paid for it with their lives, still, he said, no one can say he or she has done all to help our Jewish brethren; nor, he said, was Poland's more recent history devoid of blatant anti-Semitism. The time has come, he declared, to make a breakthrough in the relationship between Poles and Jews.

We condemn anti-Semitism, he said. We regret the attempts to foster hatred against Jews, as it happened in March 1968 or the resolution of the United Nations which identified Zionism with racism. Then, speaking through a translator, Mazowiecki added this:

[Unidentified translator] I also want to say that just as in the Middle Ages, Poland did not evade giving help to Jews persecuted in other countries, so today Poland will not evade humanitarian assistance to Jews emigrating from the Soviet Union.

[Shachter] The Polish Government spokeswoman, (Malgorzata Niezabitowska), told me afterwards that Mazowiecki's statement represented a firm commitment on the part of Poland to help in the transit of Russian Jews. I asked her if that meant it was likely that Warsaw would replace Budapest as the next transit point for Jews leaving for Israel.

[(Niezabitowska)] It's likely, but there are no details about it now. There is a commitment of the prime minister to be helpful and to help in this foundation, but there are no details.

[Shachter] Any possible time frame?

[(Niezabitowska)] We do not know really anything. It was just done today, so no knowledge about it.

[Shachter] So far, she said, Poland has not yet been asked officially to serve in that capacity, although the possibility

was raised during Foreign Minister Arens' recent visit to Warsaw. Clearly, she said, the answer would be yes. A Polish-speaking reporter for the newspaper DAVAR asked Prime Minister Mazowiecki what would happen if Warsaw then received Arab terror threats, as did Budapest. It is a hard question, he responded, then paused and added: Poland does not scare easily. [end recording]

Al-Husayni on Possible Intifadah Method Changes

TA2503062890 Jerusalem Domestic Service in English 0400 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Leading Palestinian activist Faysal al-Husayni says a positive Israeli response to the Baker proposals will lead to a change in the methods employed by the Palestinians in the intifadah. Speaking last night to members of Kibbutz Daliyya, Husayni predicted a reconciliation move by Palestinians if a government committed to peace is set up.

Officials Welcome U.S. Senate Vote on Jerusalem

TA2603094090 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 26 Mar 90 p 2

[By Robert Rees]

[Excerpts] Government officials have expressed satisfaction with last week's U.S. Senate declaration recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, while at the same time acknowledging that the vote was primarily symbolic.

"Legally, the Senate decision has no bearing," commented Foreign Ministry legal adviser Robby Sabel. "Though it was a welcome gesture, the decision in no way obligates the administration to change its policy (on Jerusalem)." [passage omitted]

Officials in Jerusalem expressed hope that the resolution might, nevertheless, have tangible results when the U.S. decides on the location of the new American embassy building scheduled to be built in Israel later this decade. [passage omitted]

U.S. Linking Assurances to Loans 'Humiliating'

TA2603101590 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 26 Mar 90 p 4

[Editorial: "Loan Guarantees and Pressure"]

[Text] The U.S. Administration's insistence on "more binding" Israel assurances on the use of U.S.-guaranteed loans is humiliating. According to the State Department, Israel's promises, routinely attached to U.S. aid in whatever form, that the money will not be used beyond the green line, will not suffice this time. Secretary Baker spelled it out: Since money is fungible, aid for immigration can free funds for settlements in "the territories," and the Administration considers this an obstacle to peace. The implication is clear: If you want loan guarantees, stop all settlement activity in Judaea, Samaria, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

The Administration's position is puzzling. On the one hand its representatives, to their credit, say that the wave of immigration from the Soviet Union is a positive development conducive to peace, and that helping the immigrants is a humanitarian act. On the other hand, they use this humanitarian act to pressure Israel into a fateful concession which would contravene the national consensus as reflected in the basic guidelines of the late unity government, and would also prejudice the outcome of future negotiations. To add insult to injury, it implies that Israel's assurances on the use of the loans are less trustworthy than those of, say, Iraqi dictator Saddam Husayn, who has received loan guarantees to the tune of $3.5 billion.

When the rescue of many thousands is at stake, a nation can and should swallow its pride. But this is not just a matter of pride. By permitting aspersions on its integrity and outright interference in its sovereign decisions to go unchallenged, Israel would be setting a dangerous and costly precedent. It must ask itself if loan guarantees are really worth this kind of risk. The $400 million in question are not grants or outright loans. They are merely government guarantees of loans, which save the borrowing government about 1 percent in interest charges. Surely, Israel can find equivalent guarantees by tapping sympathetic corporate resources in the U.S. and elsewhere.

Despite the present frantic rush to form coalitions and counter-coalitions, yesterday's cabinet meeting constructively focused on immigration problems. It concluded that the current draft budget, now in committee, predicated on an influx of 40,000 immigrants this year, was inadequate.

Clearly, a tremendous infusion of funds from abroad will be necessary. There is every reason to believe that the Jewish people have the resources and the will to provide these funds. An example was set up by one philanthropist who gave, in addition to his usual contributions, $20 million for the specific purpose of aliya absorption. There are others who can afford to give or lend as much. All they must be convinced of is that their money will not be sucked into a black hole of bureaucratic waste, but constitute an indispenable and constructive investment in the future of the Jewish people.

Tourism Ministry Official Invited to USSR

TA2503144590 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1300 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Tourism Ministry Director General Avi Rosental today received an official invitation to come to the USSR. The invitation was extended by the director of the Moscow exhibition center, who is visiting Israel. Our correspondent Menahem Friedman reports the Tourism Ministry director general said his ministry is contemplating leasing a pavilion in one of the upcoming fairs in Moscow to display the tourism options in Israel. Exhibitions of commercial firms and government ministries also will be included.

Water Purchases From Turkey Pending 'Guarantees'

TA2503150290 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 25 Mar 90 pp A1, 2

[By Aharon Pri'el]

[Text] Israel is about to purchase water in Turkey and transport it in floating reservoirs to a special terminal in the south.

An agreement on the purchase of the water will be signed soon between the Water Commission and a Turkish-Cypriot company which recently has received a Turkish Government concession to handle the business and operational aspects of the sale of water to Israel. A delegation on behalf of the commission visited Turkey about two weeks ago and concluded the specifics of the agreement with the company. This was reported by Water Commissioner Tzemah Yishay. He emphasized the Water Commission "is prepared to sign the agreement forthwith, provided the Turkish Government approved the deal in special legislation."

The water commissioner added Israel has been engaged in negotiations with Turkey over the purchase of water from the Manavgat River, which flows in the southern part of Turkey to its mouth in the Mediterranean, for about two years. Approximately seven years ago the Turks built a dam and a reservoir that has collected 1.5 billion cubic meters of water.

Israel is to purchase between 300 and 400 million cubic meters of water from Turkey per annum—nearly half the annual water supply provided by the national water carrier. "The water deal with Turkey may solve Israel's cumulative water shortage problem," the water commissioner said.

He added the investment required for the execution of the purchase and delivery of the water from Turkey to Israel is $200 million. Of this sum, the Turkish Government will invest $50 million in setting up the terminal in Turkey, while another $50 million will be invested by private and international transportation companies, including Israel's Zim—all of which are submitting their tenders to transport the water from Turkey. Israel will invest a sum of $100 million, the commissioner said, to build a special water terminal, including a 2-km pipeline to carry the water and pump it into Israel's pipeline system.

"The cost of the Turkish water will be somewhere between 22 and 24 cents per cubic meter. I emphasize again, however, that Israel only will be prepared to purchase the water from Turkey if we obtain from the Turkish Government the necessary guarantees," Tzemah Yishay noted.

Expatriate Paper Reports Upcoming Ofeq-2 Launch

TA2503113090 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 25 Mar 90 p 1

[By New York correspondent Tzadoq Yehezqeli]

[Text] Israel will launch the Ofeq-2 satellite into space within the next few days. This was claimed by YISRA'EL SHELANU [Our Israel], a newpaper published by expatriate Israelis in the United States.

The report was attributed to the paper's Israeli correspondent and asserted the Israel Aircraft Industries had completed the satellite's preparation, and that it would be launched before the end of the month. According to the report, this satellite is more sophisticated than the first one launched.

Paper Updates 24 Mar Incidents in Territories

TA2503141590 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 25 Mar 90 p A3

[By Yizhar Be'er and Eytan Rabin]

[Text] A young boy and a baby suffered gunshot injuries during incidents during the weekend in the West Bank. Tarak Halabi, 5, of Rujayb near Nabulus, was badly injured last night by a bullet in his left eye. According to relatives, the child, who was in a field, was shot by settlers near Itamar [Tel Hayim], close to the village. He was hospitalized in al-Ittihad Hospital in Nabulus, but in light of his condition was transferred to al-Maqasid Hospital in East Jerusalem.

Army sources confirmed a five-year-old child from Rujayb, suffering from bullet wounds in the head, had been brought to al-Ittihad; the sources reported that the police are investigating the circumstances of the shooting.

Raja' al-Shawqi, an eight-month-old baby from al-Firan south of Tulkarm, was hospitalized in Tulkarm Hospital after being shot in the head. Her parents claimed she was injured yesterday evening while on the roof of their house. She was transferred to Tel Hashomer Hospital in critical condition. An examination revealed the baby had been hit by a 9-mm bullet. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] have launched an investigation. An investigation by a senior officer showed no IDF troops, nor any other force, were in the village at the time of the shooting. Residents of al-Firan said they had not seen who fired the shots, nor had they encountered any soldiers or settlers in the village.

The IDF yesterday morning raided the town of 'Anabta in the Tulkarm District with a large number of soldiers.

Palestinian sources reported about 1,000 soldiers imposed a curfew on the town in the early morning hours, then gathered all of the male residents in the local schoolyard. They claimed approximately 150 residents were arrested. Helicopters were used in the operation to spot wanted men who tried to escape. The soldiers conducted house-to-house searches and incorporated tax collectors from the Civil Administration in the operation.

Two firebombs were thrown Friday [23 March] at a vehicle belonging to the Visnews news agency, which was parked near the police station in Ramallah. One of the

firebombs struck the front of the car causing slight damage, but there were no casualties.

A four-year-old girl from al-Burayj was killed Friday when she was run over by a border police jeep. Military sources reported the child jumped onto the road as the jeep drove by and subsequently was hit and killed. The military police nevertheless are investigating the incident.

Three Arab residents and two IDF soldiers were hurt during weekend disturbances in the Gaza Strip. An IDF officer was injured in the head by a rock thrown during riots in the Shaykh Radwan neighborhood, and a border policeman was injured by a stone thrown in Faris market in Gaza. A number of incidents occurred yesterday in the vicinity of Faris market, so the market was closed on the orders of a senior IDF officer. Palestinian sources reported three locals were injured during the weekend rioting. Military sources reported the IDF imposed a curfew and conducted operations in the Shabura neighborhood in Gaza; several wanted men were rounded up. Army sources added that local disturbances were noted over the weekend. Friday prayers were concluded in an orderly fashion, studies took place as usual, and no injuries were reported, excluding the four-year-old girl killed in the road accident.

Army sources yesterday evening reported that dozens of Arab youths hurled stones at an IDF observation post in Policeman's Square in Gaza. During the incident a local resident was injured by IDF gunfire. Military sources in the Gaza Strip reported there has been an exacerbation of disturbances in the Gaza Strip recently due to the number of Arabs killed during the last two weeks.

U.S. Senate Resolution 'New Blow to Arab Rights'

JN2503075090 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 25 Mar 90 pp 1, 3

[By Maryam Shahin]

[Text] Amman—The speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, the chairman of the House's Foreign Affairs Committee, and other deputies Saturday lambasted a resolution adopted by the U.S. Senate acknowledging occupied Jerusalem as the "capital of Israel," and promised prompt action against the measure.

House Speaker Sulayman 'Arar attacked the Senate's decision, which came late Thursday, saying "it is a link in the chain of conspiracies against the Arab and Palestinian rights." The resolution, he said, "offers more proof that the U.S. Senate is controlled by the Zionist lobby."

The concurrent resolution adopted by the U.S. Senate "acknowledges that Jerusalem is and should remain the capital of the state of Israel," in a dramatic conflict with official American policy, which considered the Holy City as occupied territory.

The resolution, which was introduced by Senator Patrick Moynihan (Democrat of New York) and co-sponsored by Sen. Rudy Boschwitz (Republican of Minnesota) and 82 other members of the Senate, is not binding on the U.S. Administration. It now goes before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives. After presenting and securing endorsement of the resolution, Moynihan contended that its "swift passage-...sends a message of reassurances to Israel, which is essential to making progress towards peace."

Speaker 'Arar described the resolution as a "new blow to Arab rights and a contradiction of all UN Security Council resolutions on Jerusalem."

The speaker said that the resolution came as no surprise to him and he expected the Lower House to take action on it soon.

"The fact that the Arab World has ignored its own interests for so long has opened the door for such resolutions to be adopted, and we have to brace ourselves for 'more of the same' if we Arabs continue along the same road of apathy and weakness," 'Arar said.

He stressed that "Arab and Palestinian rights cannot and will not be restored by groups and institutions that are dominated by our enemies."

The speaker of the Lower House added that "the Arab World has to take a sincere and firm stand against those who make a mockery of the Arabs' strategic interests and legitimate aspirations."

Several other members of the Lower House also condemned the American Senate's move.

Amman Deputy Faris al-Nabulsi said those senators who voted for the resolution were clearly pro-Israel and opportunists, but "more importantly perhaps they are after political and financial support from the Jewish lobby in the U.S. in preparation for congressional elections in November."

Al-Nabulsi, a member of the democratic bloc in the Lower House, said that those senators who endorsed the resolution should be boycotted by the Arab World "to the extent that it should be made clear to them that their presence on Arab soil in the future is most unwelcome."

Al-Nabulsi said European and other world parliaments should be contacted immediately, either bilaterally or through the Arab Parliamentary Union, to expose the U.S. Senate's resolution in an attempt to reverse it.

Deputy Tahir al-Masri (Amman), a former foreign minister who now heads the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said that this was not the first time that the U.S. Senate had tried to "impose such a step on the U.S. Administration and to change the status of Jerusalem." He said that the adoption of the resolution at this time was a "grave mistake and shows that the U.S. Senate is taking a very hostile measure against Arab countries."

He added that he did not feel that such a move was in the best interests of the U.S. and that he hoped that the U.S. Administration would not consider adopting such a resolution.

Islamist Deputy Layth Shubaylat said that the endorsement of the resolution by 84 out of 100 U.S. Senate members only "proves the deep animosity and bias that the U.S. has towards Arabs and Muslims." He said that the U.S. was a "province of greater Israel" and that such a resolution comes as no surprise.

He lamented that many in the Arab and Islamic world still had faith in the U.S., saying that it was obvious that the U.S. intended only to "enslave and contain them as third class citizens on this planet."

He said that he saw no other way except to fight. "We have to fight on all fronts and the U.S. will have to change their cherished values that have proven to be nothing but double standards and hypocrisy."

Clash Reported on Syrian Border; Drugs Seized

JN2303194990 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1900 GMT 23 Mar 90

[Text] A Jordanian military communique published in Amman today said Jordanian forces foiled an infiltration attempt by gunmen on the northern border with Syria the day before yesterday. The communique added the Jordanian forces, using flares, spotted and clashed with the gunmen, after which the gunmen ran away. According to the communique, Army troops combed the area and found a number of Soviet-made Kalashnikov machineguns and ammunition, along with a quantity of drugs, which were turned over to the Public Security Department.

Fadlallah on Possible Solution of Hostage Crisis

NC2603113290 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1045 GMT 26 Mar 90

[Text] 'Allamah Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah asserted today that there are new positive factors concerning the issue of the Western hostages in Lebanon. He noted that these factors suggest it is possible that a solution to this crisis can be reached.

2 Wounded in E. Beirut; Fresh Clashes Expected

NC2403181790 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1730 GMT 24 Mar 90

[Text] Guarded calm still prevails along the lines in East Beirut. Intermittent clashes and sniping, however, were reported along all the lines. A citizen was wounded this morning by sniper fire near the Hotel Dieu crossing. According to 'Awn's radio, a person in the al-Yarzah cliques was wounded this afternoon, when the vicinity of the public security headquarters and the racecourse were attacked from al-Ashrafiyah. The radio said the situation in the eastern area is not reassuring, adding that the persistence of the current conditions means that political contacts will not guarantee an end for this odd situation.

According to information, 'Awn has ordered his forces to raise their combat readiness and prepare for Armageddon. Information notes that military reinforcements are on the fronts. This indicates that the two sides to the conflict are expected to engage in a confrontation in the next few days.

In another development, sources close to the mediation committee have admitted the committee's failure to achieve any progress toward a solution for the eastern area problem. The sources said that the committee has achieved so far. They asserted that the committee is moving in a vicious circle and that several obstacles are obstructing its success.

Lebanese Forces Positions Come Under Bombardment

NC2503095890 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0845 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Shells are falling intermittently on the Lebanese Forces positions in central and upper Kasrawan. Meanwhile, the mediation committee is holding contacts with the joint security committee in order to calm the situation.

At 0715, Lebanese Forces positions came under intensive sniper fire. Riyad Biryan and Fawzi Riyashi, members of the Lebanese Forces, were slightly wounded.

Attacks involving 155-mm artillery shells have continued against the Lebanese Forces positions in Bqa'tuta and the fringes of Fa'rah from Qurnat Shahwan.

The Bashir al-Jumayyil Institute in Ghusta has come under 155-mm shelling. The Lebanese Forces positions in 'Ajaltun have also come under bombardment from artillery emplacements in Bikfayya.

Lebanese Army units used 155-mm shells to pound the area of Bqa'tuta in a violent and concentrated manner from 0815 to 0930.

At 1000, stray shells fell on the electricity company in al-Zuq and on the Adonis and Yasu' al-Malik areas.

The Nahr al-Kalb crossing has been closed on the al-Dubayyah side.

'Awn Reportedly Retaliates for Attack

NC2503100490 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0900 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Excerpt] According to security reports emanating from the eastern area, extreme tension prevails on the newly created confrontation lines between 'Awn's forces and the Lebanese Forces. Clashes involving automatic weapons and rockets took place this morning.

The reports indicated that intermittent artillery shelling was exchanged on the Kasrawan front this morning.

'Awn's radio has reported that 'Awn's positions in Kafr 'Uqab, Bikfayya, 'Ayn al-Tuffahah, Rumyah, and al-Qulay'at have been coming under violent shelling from the Lebanese Forces positions in Rayfun, 'Ajaltun, 'Ashqut, Ballunah, and Yasu' al-Malik.

The radio said that, in view of the violent bombardment involving the use of rocket launchers and heavy-caliber mortars, 'Awn's forces were compelled to fire back to silence the sources of the bombardment. [passage omitted]

Lebanese Forces Positions Attacked

NC2503175490 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] On the security level, a state of relaxation prevails along the newly created combat lines in the eastern area this afternoon following the flareup which involved the areas of coastal and central Kasrawan in the morning, leaving two people dead and two Lebanese Forces members injured. The situation deteriorated in the afternoon along the various fronts in Beirut and the suburbs and fighting broke out in the Galerie al-Ittihad and the Olivetti areas. Tanks, mortars, RPG's, and heavy- and medium-caliber machineguns were used in the fighting.

Meanwhile, sniper fire was directed at the areas of Sinn al-Fil, al-Barjawi, Jisr al-Wati, al-Shaluhi, and al-Nab'ah. RPG-7 projectiles landed on Hayy al-Siryan and Galerie Khabbaz. Furthermore, the Lebanese Forces' positions in the Museum and Olivetti were subjected to tank fire originating from the Army positions in the Buick area.

The attacks on the Lebanese Forces subsided as of 1630.

In a similar development, General Michel 'Awn's media said that shells fell on Bikfayya, Darayya, Rumyah, al-Dubayyah, and Antilyas, pointing out that citizen Siham Ghusun was killed and three others wounded in the bombardment.

REUTER reports that today's battles represent the gravest violation of cease-fire which was reached on 2 March.

Lebanese Forces Positions 'Bombarded' 26 Mar

NC2603053990 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0415 GMT 26 Mar 90

[Text] Security incidents escalated last night and this morning in most parts of the eastern area, after a tense day which saw the most violence since the beginning of March. At 0230 today, the Kasrawan area was the target of several artillery shells. Lebanese Forces positions in the Kasrawan heights, specifically the Darayya-al-Qulay'at front, were also heavily bombarded from General 'Awn's Army positions. This was accompanied by several hours of intensive heavy machine gun fire.

The Kasrawan coast was bombarded from Gen. 'Awn's Army positions from 2230 yesterday until early this morning, but the Lebanese Forces did not respond to the fire. The al-Barjawi area was the target of RPG-7's from [word indistinct] and al-Tibbiyah at 2300 yesterday. Bursts of medium-caliber machine gun fire were also directed at the Honda building near the Hotel Dieu. Guarded calm currently prevails along the combat lines extending from the museum until Nahr al-Mawt.

Several Injured by Sniper Fire

NC2603104190 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1015 GMT 26 Mar 90

[Text] According to the latest security reports, guarded calm prevails on various newly created combat lines in the eastern area, except for sniper fire directed at civilians on the Nahr al-Kalb crossing at 1100 today. After 1100, sniper fire was directed at the Galerie al-Ittihad area. The Lebanese Forces are currently dealing with the situation trying to silence the sources of fire.

Here is a new report from the news desk: We learned a short time ago that General 'Awn's Army positions continue to direct sniper fire at the Nahr al-Kalb crossing. We have learned that five vehicles were hit by sniper fire and some individuals have been injured.

Crossing Points Inside East Beirut Closed

NC2603143990 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1400 GMT 26 Mar 90

[Text] Sniper fire and sporadic artillery and rocket shelling are reported on most of East Beirut's line. As of 1215 today, all crossing points inside East Beirut were closed, as both sides mobilized fighters and reinforced their positions.

'Awn, Ma'luf Cite E. Beirut Shortage of Funds

NC2503144390 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1400 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Michel 'Awn, the head of the military clique, has resumed his old habit of summoning crowds to B'abda Palace to cheer for him and to use them as a human rampart for his own protection. In a speech before these crowds, 'Awn said that he will not change his policies. He hinted that the Lebanese Forces are traitors to their homeland.

'Awn said: We still have many friends who are helping us achieve our original goals. 'Awn praised his troops for what he described as their defense of Lebanon's borders. He called on youths to enroll in his gangs.

'Awn did not forget to assail the lawful government. He said that the government [of Salim al-Huss] is calling for discrimination among citizens and is holding back salaries owed to what he called the free area. 'Awn added that the government seeks to repress, impoverish, and starve the people.

Edgar Ma'luf, one of 'Awn's aides, said that the funds available to 'Awn have been nearly exhausted and that no salaries will be paid in East Beirut in March and April.

Ma'luf said that 'Awn paid the February salaries from the treasury's tax revenue. Ma'luf accused the legitimate government of blakmail and noted that indirect exchanges are under way to resolve that problem.

Al-Hirawi Denies Salaries Stopped

NC2603103590 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1000 GMT 26 Mar 90

[Text] President Ilyas al-Hirawi has denied that the state has stopped paying salaries to eastern area officials. During a meeting with the General Labor Federation delegation led by Antoine Bisharah today, the president explained that the state's treasury must retrieve certain sums of money to be able to pay what is due from this money. He emphasized that the state is responsible for all the people including those who have been misled by slogans. He said that he will not answer any slogans because he is responsible for all Lebanon. He continued that he did not attain the post as president of the republic because of a war or because he was aboard a tank; he attained it democratically. President al-Hirawi threatened to disclose the names of two people in whose name about $75 million belonging to the state was deposited.

Speaker Al-Husayni Leaves for Paris 24 Mar

NC2403123090 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1045 GMT 24 Mar 90

[Text] Chamber of Deputies Speaker Husayn al-Husayni left for Paris at noon today accompanied by Deputies Butrus Harb, Nadim Salim, and Mikhayil al-Dahir. Al-Husayni will try to persuade the deputies in Paris to

come to Beirut to ensure a quorum at the parliamentary sessions, which will cover the constitutional amendments. Al-Husayni will brief the deputies on the developments in Lebanon and on the results of the parliamentary session conducted at the chamber building in al-Najmah Square last Tuesday.

Deputy Harb will go from Paris to West Germany to participate in a seminar on peace in Lebanon.

AFP Reports SLA Demands 100 'Volunteers'

NC2303213990 Paris AFP in English 2110 GMT 23 Mar 90

[Text] Tyre, Lebanon, March 23 (AFP)—Israel ordered villagers in southern Lebanon to supply "100 volunteers" to its proxy militia in the region by Saturday or face unspecified retaliatory measures, a security source here said Friday.

An officer of Israel's Shin Beth intelligence service, backed by Israeli troops and militiamen from the South Lebanon Army, rounded up the 3,000 villagers of 'Ayta al-Sha'b on Tuesday and told them to provide SLA with "100 volunteers" by Saturday, the source said.

Israeli troops and SLA militiamen that it trains and finances jointly control the so-called "security zone" that runs along the international border, covering 850 square kilometers (340 square miles) inside Lebanon.

Last week the SLA banned Lebanese men under 35 from leaving the "security zone" to travel to Israel, following reports that 400 youths aged between 20 and 25 had recently gone to Israel to obtain emigration visas from Western embassies there.

But relatives of some 2,000 "security zone" residents who travel daily to Israel to work in factories and fields have been exempted from the ban, the source added.

Those who do hold jobs in Israel for a monthly salary of 300 dollars must have at least one family member enrolled in the SLA and pay 70 dollars in revenue and municipal taxes.

The 2,150-strong SLA has been trying unsuccessfully over the past few years to recruit fighters.

Amal Detonates Explosive Charge in South

NC2303174490 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1630 GMT 23 Mar 90

[Text] The operations room of the Lebanese Resistance Brigades—Amal in the south announced that one of its groups has detonated an explosive charge of TNT weighing 75 kg as a patrol of the Zionist enemy and his agents was moving on the al-Qawzah-Jabal Humayd in the Bint Jubayl district. The charge destroyed an M-113 armored personnel carrier and wounded all its passengers. As a result, the enemy reacted and launched a wide-scale raking operation in the area, using automatic weapons and 60-mm and 82-mm guns.

In retaliation for the resistance fighters' heroic operation, a Zionist force of 75 soldiers entered Sribbin at 1000, storming a number of houses and scattering their contents. The enemy force assembled the village residents and accused them of keeping silent about the mujahidin infiltration into the occupied border strip. The enemy troops leveled insults at the women and the elderly, warning them of a bad fate if they continue to support the resistance.

A Lahd militia group abducted two residents of al-Tiri village from the Shu'aytu and Hammud families. A Lahd militia force abducted some residents last week and took them to Saff al-Hawa'.

Hizballah Forces Said To Repulse Amal Attack

NC2403075490 (Clandestine) Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic to Lebanon 0630 GMT 24 Mar 90

[Text] A Hizballah source has affirmed that groups belonging to the Amal Movemnt led by Birri and Elie Hubayqah [former Lebanese Forces Executive Committee chairman] persist in keeping sedition ablaze and the situation explosive in the Iqlim al-Tuffah area. They are continuing their war against the Islamic resistance, which expresses and embodies Muslims' aspirations. They thus emphasize their obduracy and refusal to solve the problem by any means. They continued their acts of aggression against Iqlim al-Tuffah villages yesterday.

At 1800, these groups attempted to advance on Kafr Milki, but the mujahidin succeeded in repulsing and foiling the assault. At 1730, Kafr Milki and Tallat Jurnaya came under violent 120-mm artillery bombardment and intensive 23-mm gunfire. At 1745, the town came under 107-mm rocket fire from the Birri groups' emplacements in Kafr Bayt. It transpired that the bombardment was intended as preparation for an advance on the village. At 1800, the Birri and Hubayqah groups attempted to advance on Kafr Milki from the direction of Kafr Hatta and the Al-Rabiyah school, but the mujahidin repulsed the attempt and foiled it following a battle in which they bombarded the town with artillery and rockets from their positions.

The Hizballah source said that these groups are inflaming the situation in order to prevent evacuees from returning to their villages and to circumvent all attempts to end the sedition.

Amal Accuses Hizballah of Shelling Villages

NC2403183090 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1800 GMT 24 Mar 90

[Text] An Amal Movement security source has stressed the villages of Sarba, Jarju', and Kafr Bayt were subjected today to heavy artillery bombardment originating from Hizballah positions. One person was injured and three houses were heavily damaged.

The same source added that 'Arab Salim came under concentrated sniper fire from the Islamic resistance

positions in Jabal Safi and al-Luwayzah this morning. A woman was seriously injured.

Amal Movement leader Minister Nabih Birri meanwhile closely followed the situation in Iqlim al-Tuffah and the efforts being exerted to end this situation. Regarding this, he received a delegation led by Ahmad Khayr al-Din. The talks revolved around the ways that will end the dispute between the movement and Hizballah.

1 Killed, 5 Injured in Renewed Shiite Fighting

NC2503121790 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1130 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] The situation in Iqlim al-Tuffah became tense this morning when Amal Movement and Hizballah personnel exchanged artillery shelling from their respective positions. Security sources have reported that shells fell on several villages. According to the reports, Husayn Zahwah, a member of the Amal Movement, was killed and five citizens were injured. In addition, there was heavy damage to property.

Israeli Warplanes Fly Over Beirut 25 Mar

NC2503104790 Beirut Voice of National Resistance in Arabic 1030 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Israeli warplanes broke the sound barrier twice as they flew over the capital at approximately 1130 today.

1 Reported Killed in Fire at Soviet Embassy

NC2303180090 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1730 GMT 23 Mar 90

[Text] A fire broke out on the second floor of the Soviet Embassy building this afternoon due to a short in the electrical wiring. A little while ago, civil defense authorities said the huge fire was under control in four hours. Soviet Ambassador Vasiliy Kolotusha supervised the operation to extinguish the fire. Reports say that the body of an embassy employee believed to be a diplomat was found inside the building and taken to the American University Hospital, but this has not yet been confirmed.

Blaze 'Probably an Accident'

NC2403121290 Paris AFP in English 1203 GMT 24 Mar 90

[Text] Beirut, March 24 (AFP)—A Soviet filing clerk was killed in the fire that broke out Friday at the Soviet Embassy in West Beirut, a Soviet diplomat said Saturday, adding that the blaze was probably an accident. Another Soviet national, a technician, was badly burnt in the fire that destroyed a second-floor room at the mission in the mainly Moslem, Syrian-controlled sector of the Lebanese capital, he said. "We assume the origin of the fire was accidental and are trying to find out the reasons. It was probably a short-circuit," the diplomat said.

Syrian soldiers are deployed on access roads to the embassy while a Lebanese Army tank is posted outside the mission, blocking traffic. Embassy staff did not allow Lebanese police to enter the building during the fire, and firefighters brought the flames under control from the outside. The blaze lasted one hour.

Al-Asad in Libya To Celebrate UK Expulsion

JN2403120090 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1115 GMT 24 Mar 90

[Text] Tubruq—His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad has arrived in Tubruq in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah to participate in celebrations by our Libyan Arab people to mark the 20th anniversary of the evacuation of British troops and bases from Libyan lands.

Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, leader of the 1 September revolution, led those who welcomed his excellency the president at the hall of Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir's air base. Sudanese President Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir, who arrived earlier to take part in these celebrations, also was there to welcome his excellency the president.

His excellency the president hugged Col. al-Qadhdhafi and shook hands with senior Libyan officials. They mounted the dais when the musical band played the Syrian Arab and Libyan national anthems. The masses crowding the air base were chanting slogans expressing support for the two Arab leaders and also for the Arab nation. The masses were holding pictures of his excellency the president and raising placards praising Syria and describing it as the symbol of Arab pride.

His excellency the president shook hands with senior officials on hand to welcome him: secretaries of people's committees, senior officers of the Libyan Armed Forces, and diplomatic staff.

Egyptian President Husni Mubarak later arrived to take part in these celebrations. After the reception ceremonies were completed, His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad, Col. Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, President Husni Mubarak, and President 'Umar Hasan al-Bashir headed for the military parade platform. The air show, which included Libyan, Syrian, and Egyptian air squadrons, began. The parade is continues.

Returns 25 Mar

JN2503154890 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1515 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] President Hafiz al-Asad returned to Damascus this afternoon from the Arab Libyan Jamahiriyah, where he joined our Arab people in Libya in their celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the evacuation of foreign troops from Libyan soil.

The accompanying delegation—comprised of Vice President Dr. Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah, Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar', and Wahib Fadil, minister of state for presidential affairs—returned with the president.

The president was given a warm send off at Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir Air Force Base in Tubruq, which was attended by Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, leader of the 1 September Revolution in Libya; senior officials of the people's committee in the Jamahiriyah and Tubruq area, and the Libyan masses.

The president conducted a meeting with Col. al-Qadhdhafi at noon today, during which they continued their discussions of developments in the Arab arena in light of the new international facts, and the dangers facing the Arab nation's interests and the best means to face them through national Arab stands.

Afghanistan

Gunmen Kill 'Top' Mujahidin Commander, 5 Rebels

BK2603004890 Hong Kong AFP in English 1721 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Peshawar, Pakistan, March 25 (AFP)—Unidentified gunmen assassinated a top military commander of the Afghan resistance and five of his colleagues in this Pakistani border city on Sunday, members of his family said. Nasim Akhunzada, 37, a guerrilla leader with some 10,000 mujahidin under his command, died in indiscriminate firing by an unspecified number of people, they said.

An influential leader of the Afghan resistance's Harakat-e Enqilab-e Eslami-e faction led by Nabi Muhammadi, Mr. Akhunzada was active in Helmand and Qandahar Provinces in the southwest of the war-torn Afghanistan. Resistance sources said another force of 1,000 men was operating under his command in Oruzgan Province.

The sources said he was in Peshawar for the past few weeks for important talks. At about 2:00 p.m. (0900 GMT) he left Peshawar for the suburban district of Cheerat where Mr. Muhammadi had his office and residence. Gunmen sprayed bullets on Mr. Akhunzada's vehicle close to the office, killing him instantly along with five mujahidin colleagues, the sources said. Another in the group was wounded seriously.

Party sources said one of the assassins had been captured, but his identity has not been disclosed. It was not clear if the assassination was the work of the Afghan secret police Khad or the result of factional feuding among the resistance parties.

Mr. Akhunzada, a full-time fighter, had thwarted repeated Soviet offensives against his stronghold in northern districts of Helmand Province during the red army's stay from 1979 to 1989. He played a key role in convening the tribal shura (assembly) in February 1989 which formed the rebels' interim government.

Mr. Mohammadi was given the Defence Ministry portfolio in the Afghan Interim Government (AIG) and sources said the party chief was considering naming Mr. Akhunzada to the post of AIG chief of staff. Resistance sources said Mr. Akhunzada had recently ordered a ban on poppy growing in his region, which was known for opium production.

Government To Tighten Foreign Exchange Controls

BK2303120690 Hong Kong AFP in English 1143 GMT 23 Mar 90

[By Anil Penna]

[Text] Kabul, March 23 (AFP)—The Afghan Government will tighten foreign exchange controls in a bid to conserve dollars, check inflation and shore up the sagging national currency in Kabul's freewheeling unofficial money bazaar. The government has also hiked by 26 per cent its export target for the new year celebrated in Afghanistan on Wednesday [21 March], and will raise hotel and telecommunications tariffs for foreign visitors in an effort to rake in foreign exchange.

Finance Minister Hamidullah Tarzi said in an interview here that Kabul would tap an unutilised 68 million dollar loan and perhaps a "little more" from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), adding that the government had also received "encouraging signals" from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Mr. Tarzi also said the government would institute "very rigid" exchange controls aimed at braking a dramatic plunge by the Afghan currency, whose unofficial dollar exchange rate has slipped from 350 to 570 in the past year. "We have had a very lax exchange regime so far and it is time to plug the loopholes," he said. At issue are strict controls on government spending in non-essential import areas and a clampdown on exchange sanctions.

Kabul has established a special unit to negotiate foreign bids to the lowest possible rate in order to eliminate middlemen, Mr. Tarzi said. Under the current "decontrolled exchange regime," traders have been allowed 15,000 to 16,000 dollars while Afghan tourists abroad have been allowed a foreign travel allowance up to 3,000 dollars at one time, he said, hinting that those limits would be significantly reduced. The aim is to lower exchange rates by 20 to 30 per cent and build foreign currency reserves so the government can intervene as an effective "price-maker" and check inflation, Mr. Tarzi said.

Government banks now buy U.S. dollars for 50 afghanis, less than 10 per cent of the dollar's worth in the money bazaar. Banks pay 97 afghanis against an unofficial rate of 890 for the pound sterling, 22 afghanis against an unofficial 325 for the West German mark, and nine afghanis against an unofficial 87 for the French franc.

All currencies have been spiralling upwards in the past year, and Finance Ministry officials feared in December—as the dollar rose by 125 afghanis—that the Afghan currency would soon be worth no more than the paper on which it was printed. The government then banned its agencies and the public sector from buying in the overheated money market and promised to purchase exporters' dollar earnings at prevailing market rates, although the afghani has continued to slide.

The banking system was unable to intervene effectively, Mr. Tarzi said, adding that Kabul had faced a "lot of pressure" to order an official devaluation. "We resisted the pressure because we believe that the situation in the money market is not real—it is artificial," he said. "It is a question of demand and supply which we are trying to bridge." Afghanistan's traditional and lucrative re-export trade was damaged, he said, when the eastern transit road to Pakistan was closed because of war.

A money merchant here said dollars had stopped coming in from Pakistan, where the afghani is also reported to have fallen steeply.

Continuing uncertainty has prompted some traders here to exchange earnings into hard currency daily, thus further devaluing the afghani, he said. But Finance Ministry officials are hopeful that the situation will be improved by an anticipated increase in export earnings this year. They have budgeted for a 26 per cent rise in overseas sales, banking on what officials describe as a "quantitative and qualitative growth of agricultural, industrial and mine products," as well the hope that natural gas exports to the Soviet Union will resume.

Exports plunged from 491.8 million dollars in the 1988 to 1989 fiscal year to 383.3 million dollars last year, largely as the result of a year-long halt in gas exports, cut for security reasons when Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan in February 1989. Meanwhile imports rose from 764 to 798 million dollars and are expected to rise another 13.2 per cent in the current fiscal year.

Landlocked Afghanistan has also suffered from rising costs and considerable delays in transport and transit of goods to neighboring Iran, Pakistan and the Soviet Union due to a prolonged civil war, while production of traditional items such as fruit, seed, cotton and fur coats and jackets has fallen for lack of demand, official said. Outside massive Soviet aid including most basic foodstuffs, imports consist mainly of consumer and capital goods, chemical fertilizers and petroleum products.

Defense Council Approves Development Plan, Budget

LD2503194590 Kabul Domestic Service in Pashto 1530 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Today a session of the Supreme Council for the Defense of Homeland [SCDH] was held under the chairmanship of Esteemed Najibullah, president of Afghanistan. In the session, Sultan 'Ali Keshtmand, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers, presented a report on the socioeconomic development plan and state budget for the year 1369 [year beginning 20 March 1990]. The socioeconomic development plan and state budget for the year 1369 was approved. Also during the SCDH session the issue of a work system and transportion for state employees and ensuring the security of the highways and social and economic establishments was assessed and discussed. The necessary decisions were taken in this connection.

AIG Governor Assumes Charge in Konarha Province

BK2203125790 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 22 Mar 90 p 8

[Bureau report]

[Text] Peshawar, March 21—Muhammad 'Ali Rahmani, Afghan Interim Government's [AIG] Governor-designate for Mujahidin-controlled Konarha province, was reported to have officially started working in the provincial captial Asadabad from March 19.

A press release by MIDIA [Media Information Department of Islamic Afghanistan] claimed that the new Governor presided the first meeting of the provincial council in Asadabad after an impressive ceremony. A resolution approved in the meeting said the provincial Shura [Consultative Council] would work towards establishment of an Islamic government in Afghanistan. It said all Mujahidin commanders and their supporters unitedly contributed to the security and defence of Konarha since its liberation on September 11, 1989.

It may be added that Muhammad 'Ali Rahmani was named Governor by the AIG in place of Maulvi Ghulam Rabbani. Both belonged to Burhanuddin Rabbani's Jamiat-e Eslami. Mr Rahmani however was unable to enter Konarha and assume his responsibilities as Governor even after several months due to opposition by most Mujahidin parties and commanders. The local leadership of the Mujahidin parties later formed a joint Shura and held elections on party basis. Maulana Jamilur Rahman's Ahl-e Hadith party secured the highest number of votes in the elections which began on March 1 in spite of AIG opposition.

Meanwhile, the leader of Hezb-e Eslami, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, in a message on the eve of new Afghan year has expressed the optimism that it would mark the end of hostility and lead to the establishment of an elected Islamic government in the war-torn Afghanistan.

Hekmatyar in a statement, observed that Najib regime was the stumbling block to all peace efforts being aimed at restoring peace in Afghanistan. He said that Najib, in order to prolong his rule would not hesitate to assassinate even his closest allies as has been claimed by his comrades. The Hezb-e Eslami Chief urged the Afghan people to forge unity in their ranks and prove to the world that they are not power hungry. This could be done only through the holding of free and fair elections in Afghanistan so that a representative government could be formed, Mr Hekmatyar maintained.

In Peshawar the Afghan Interim Government President Sebghatullah Mojaddedi received Zia Rizvi, Assistant to U.N. Coordinator for Economic and Humanitarian Programmes for Afghanistan, Prince Sadruddin Agha Khan, Wednesday [21 March].

Mr Rizvi informed Prof. Mojaddedi about the U.N. Relief activities in Afghanistan especially in its northern and north western region. He disclosed that the U.N. would shortly undertake distribution of foodstuff, fertilizers and improved seed, to local inhabitants.

Bangladesh

Subdistrict Elections End; Jatiya Party Leads

BK2503161790 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] In Bangladesh, the 12-day-long upazilla [subdistrict] election ended today amid reports of scattered violence and rigging. Reports say at least 23 people were killed and several hundred injured in poll violence.

Out of 406 upazilla results available so far, the ruling Jatiya Party tops the list with 140 posts as chairmen, followed by Awami League, 99; Jamaat-i- Islami, 24; and independents and others 143.

AIR [All India Radio] Dhaka correspondent says although upazilla elections are conducted on nonparty basis, almost all political parties fielded their candidates.

Ershad: Finance Minister Fired for Mismanagement

BK2503115090 Hong Kong AFP in English 1134 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Dhaka, March 25 (AFP)—Bangladesh President Hussain Mohammad Ershad was quoted Sunday [25 March] as saying that he fired former finance minister Wahidul Haq for mismanagement. Mr. Ershad also said he resented Mr. Haq's recent comments on the country's economy. "I told him to resign since he could not manage things properly," Mr. Ershad was quoted by THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER as telling senior local journalists at a meeting here Saturday.

Mr. Haq, a statistician and economist who left his job teaching economics in Canada to join the Ershad government in August 1988, resigned March 15 after warning of a serious economic crisis for this impoverished and overpopulated South Asian country. The state-run BTV television said in a brief announcement the same day that Mr. Ershad had accepted his resignation. Since resigning, Mr. Haq has refused to speak to the press.

According to THE OBSERVER, Mr. Ershad reiterated that there was "nothing wrong with the economy and the foreign exchange reserve is comfortable now," adding that it would be boosted during the next two months, when a 175 million dollar energy sector credit and a 100 million dollar financial sector credit would be released by the Washington-based World Bank. Mr. Ershad's comments came amid reports of fresh World Bank commitments of two billion dollars for Bangladesh at a Paris aid consortium meeting in April.

He said he also resented Mr. Haq's statement at a conference here March 8 that Bangladesh's foreign exchange reserve had slumped by a large-scale flight of capital and that there was heavy pressure on foreign exchange this year because the economy picked up. But Mr. Ershad admitted some irregularities in imports and was quoted by the paper as saying that a committee of senior bureaucrats had been formed to identify them. No details were given.

Earlier, Mr. Ershad said in a published interview that there was no contradiction with Mr. Haq's statement and that he had "probably" been misunderstood and his comments taken out of context.

Mr. Ershad, an army general who seized power in a 1982 bloodless coup, also categorically shunned rumours of a further devaluation of the taka. "There will be no further devaluation by June as speculated," he said.

The taka was devalued by five per cent early this month and was set at 33.89 to the dollar.

He said differences with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund on raising the consumer prices for fertilizer and natural gas by 15 per cent delayed credits from those institutions, which was also the cause for a slump in the foreign exchange reserves, currently at 500 million dollars.

Asked to comment on the resignation of Planning Minister Abdul Karim Khandaker, Mr. Ershad said Mr. Khandaker had resigned on personal grounds. The resignation of Mr. Khandaker, who has refused to say anything about his sudden decision, was accepted by the president on Thursday.

Mr. Ershad also said that he planned to merge the ministries of finance and planning. Former agriculture minister Abdul Munim was named to head both posts after the resignations.

India

Singh Describes Bhutto Statements as 'Unfriendly'

BK2603085990 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 26 Mar 90

[Text] The prime minister today declared that Pakistan will have to pay heavily for any misadventure on its part and India will meet the challenge with all the force and arsenal at its command. Resuming his reply on the motion of thanks to the president for his address to Parliament in the Rajya Sabha today, Mr. V.P. Singh asserted that any interference with our integrity—covertly or overtly—will be taken as a challenge and will be met firmly.

Referring to the recent attempts by Pakistani nationals to cross over into India, the prime minister said such attempts have been repulsed in the past and will be dealt with sternly in the future also. If Islamabad thinks it can go on with it, it is completely mistaken. He said the recent pronouncements by the Pakistan prime minister are unfriendly.

Sharing the anxiety of the members over the deterioration in the situation in Kashmir, the prime minister said it is a challenge to the democratic set up of the country.

He appealed to all political parties to join hands with the government in bringing a solution to the problem.

Expressing his grief over the killing of the former MLA [member of legislative assembly], Mir Mustafa, the prime minister said the situation in the valley has been aggravated by the encouragement being received by the militants from across the border. He said the authority in the state has to be established and at the same time we have to win back the confidence of the people.

'Militants' Kill Kidnapped Kashmiri Politician

BK2503064890 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0630 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] In Jammu and kashmir, Mir Musatafa, independent member of the dissolved [state] assembly, who was kidnapped by militants in Srinagar on Friday [24 March] night has been killed. The adviser to the governor, Mr. J.M. Qureshi, told UNI [UNITED NEWS OF INDIA] that the body of Mir Mustafa was found in (Batamallu) area this morning. The official spokesman said that no group has so far claimed the responsibility for the kidnapping of Mir Mustafa. An inquiry into the incident has been ordered.

Muslim Group Claims Responsibility

BK2503100490 Hong Kong AFP in English 0939 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Srinagar, India, March 25 (AFP)—Suspected Moslem militants murdered an abducted Kashmir legislator and hung his corpse from a tree here Sunday [25 March] after a deadline given to the government to set free 10 jailed militants expired. Police found the bullet-riddled corpse of abducted lawmaker Mir Mustafa, 54, hanging in the posh Batmaloo area of Srinagar, the hub of a militant-led campaign for Kashmir's secession, sources said.

A second murder occurred Sunday when suspected Moslem assassins shot dead Ghulam Nabi, a local Moslem leader of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi's Congress (I) Party, in Anantnag, 60 kilometres (36 miles) from here, police said. They gave no further details.

The killing of Mr. Mustafa came after four militants intercepted his car on the city's outskirts late Friday and abducted him as part of a planned swap for 10 of their jailed associates, the sources said.

Although the state administration has denied that the abductors contacted them for release negotiations, militant sources said they had set a 36-hour deadline for the hostage swap. The sources did not name the 10 men whom the abductors wanted to be released in exchange of Mr. Mustafa, but said a fundamentalist Moslem group called the Hezb-ul-Mujahidin had claimed responsibility for the abduction and murder.

The militant organisation has accused the politician of being a police spy and said Mr. Mustafa was killed because his "anti-Islamic ways." "We have gunned him down to teach a lesson to those politicians who stand in our path to freedom," the sources said quoting a statement being repeated by sympathisers of pro-secessionist militants in Srinagar.

The bloody campaign in Kashmir is often run through whisper campaigns as militants say they would not use government telephones.

It was not known why Mr. Mustafa was selectively abducted and murdered, but officials said the politician was lately trying to persuade militants to hold negotiations with New Delhi for a settlement to the Kashmir issue.

Mr. Mustafa, an independent member of the dissolved Jammu and Kashmir legislature, was a key negotiator in talks to secure the release of Federal Home Minister Mufti Muhammad Sayeed's daughter, Rubiya, after she was kidnapped in December. Ms. Sayeed was released in exchange of five jailed Kashmiri militants.

"We are happy that Mr. Mustafa has been killed. We also do not condemn the other killings," the president of the radical Dakhtarane Millet (daughters of faith), Aasiyeh Andrabi, told AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE by telephone.

The radical women's organisation recently asked Kashmiri girls to carry daggers or guns to defend their honour during police raids in curfew-bound Kashmir and said it backed the militants' campaign for the state's independence.

The UNITED NEWS OF INDIA had quoted Kashmir governor Jag Mohan's advisor J.M. Qureshi as saying Saturday that he refused to negotiate with the lawmaker's abductors. "We will deal with the militants professionally and get Mr. Mustafa released," Mr. Qureshi said, adding that the official had denied that the militants had contacted him for a hostage swap deal.

Meanwhile, the PRESS TRUST OF INDIA news agency said two paramilitary troopers were injured Sunday when militants hurled a grenade into a police truck in Anantnag. A civilian was also injured when the troopers fired on the attackers.

Up to 300 people, including several government officials and abducted civilians, have died so far this year in violence linked to the pro-independence unrest sweeping the Kashmir valley.

More Killings, Kidnapping Reported in Kashmir

BK2403160890 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 24 Mar 90

[Excerpts] In Jammu and Kashmir, militants today shot dead a deputy superintendent of police [DSP] and kidnapped a member of the dissolved assembly. The DSP, Home Guard, Mr. Ghulam Hasan Tabassum, was returning home after offering namaz [prayers] in the afternoon when terrorists opened fire at him in Srinagar. [passage omitted]

In another incident, a civilian was shot dead in Pir Bagh as curfew was relaxed in the state capital from 0500 to 1200 in the morning. It was also relaxed for varying periods in other towns of the valley.

Meanwhile, the assassination of the veteran communist leader, Mr. Abdul Sattar Ranjur, by terrorists last night has been widely condemned. The governor, Mr. Jagmohan, described the killing as a dastardly action and sanctioned ex gratia relief of 1 lakh rupees to the next of kin of Mr. Ranjur.

The Central Secretariat of the Communist Party in a statement in New Delhi today called upon all secular and patriotic people to condemn the assassination and join hands to solve the difficult and complex problems of Kashmir.

'Crisis' in Meghalaya as 6 Ministers Resign

BK2603031890 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 26 Mar 90

[Text] In Meghalaya, the coalition government headed by Mr. P.A. Sangma of the Congress-I has plunged into a crisis following the resignation of six ministers last night. Three of them are of cabinet rank and the other three are ministers of state. The cabinet ministers who resigned from the coalition United Meghalaya Parliamentary Forum ministry are Mrs. Miriam D. Shira, Mr. S.P. Swer, and Mr. Anthony Lyngdoh. The state ministers are Mr. (Don Kupar Roy), Mr. H.D.R. Lyngdoh, and Mr. S.L. Marbaniang.

The no-confidence motion which was moved against the Sangma ministry by the opposition last week is to be taken up for discussion in the state assembly in Shillong today. The state budget for the next financial year is also scheduled to be presented today.

Out of 59, the opposition claims a strength of 32 in the 60-member house.

Meanwhile, the former chairman of the Meghalaya State Planning Board, Mr. B.B. Lyngdoh, who resigned on the 15th of this month, has been elected leader of the newly formed opposition Meghalaya United Parliamentary Party.

Goa Chief Minister, Meghalaya Ministry Resign

BK2603080290 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0730 GMT 26 Mar 90

[Text] The Goa chief minister, Mr. Pratapsingh Rane, announced his resignation in the state assembly this morning.

The budget session of the assembly began at 1100. As soon as the speaker took his seat, both sides started shouting slogans and accusing each other. In the chaos that prevailed, the chief minister, Mr. Rane, announced his resignation.

The Meghalaya Ministry, headed by Mr. P.A. Sangma of the Congress-I, has resigned. Mr. Sangma submitted his resignation along with resignation of his cabinet colleagues to the state governor, Mr A.A. Rahim, at Raj Bhavan [Governor's House] in Shillong this morning. While accepting the resignation, the governor requested Mr. Sangma to continue in office till alternative arrangements are made. As reported earlier, the coalition government in the state headed by Mr. Sangma lost its majority in the assembly following the resignation of six ministers yesterday.

'Terrorists' Kill 4, Injure 12 in Punjab 23 Mar

BK2403040090 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 24 Mar 90

[Text] In Punjab, terrorists shot dead four persons, including two policemen, and seriously injured 12 others in separate incidents last evening.

According to an official spokesman, two members of the security force were killed when terrorists ambushed a patrolling party in Jia area of Ferozepore District last night.

In Amritsar District, terrorists fired at a religious congregation inside a gurdwara [Sikh temple] in village Jora in Patti area, killing two persons, including the granthi [reciter of Sikh holy scriptures], and seriously injured another five. The police believe the incident to be a result of intergang rivalry of the terrorists.

'Powerful Bomb Blast' in Uttar Pradesh Kills 7

BK2603010490 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0035 GMT 26 Mar 90

[Text] Agency reports say at least seven people were killed and several injured in a powerful bomb blast in a cinema house at Kashipur in Uttar Pradesh yesterday. Police officials rushed to the site of the blast in the newly constructed theater. The injured have been rushed to various hospitals.

Iran

Paper Cited on Facilitating Release of Hostages

LD2503133590 Tehran IRNA in English 1107 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Tehran, March 25, IRNA—Two Iranian dailies Sunday editorialized on the new Iranian year 1369 started March 21 expressing the hope that it will be a year of peace, understanding and determination.

The English daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' said, "Hopes are high that this year will be witnessing positive developments in many areas of the national life and the Islamic revolution." Referring to bottlenecks and the problems government of President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani is facing, it said, "In the domestic scene the government is facing high inflation, relative unemployment and high prices" adding "the people especially the low income classes have high expectations that the government will solve these problems."

The paper also stressed on "no West, no East" policy of the Islamic Republic, and believed in international arena, "The country is in no way enmeshed in any critical position."

Stressing "it is a policy of the Islamic Republic to expand friendly ties with non-hostile nations to the fullest extent", the paper believed, "What will help best execution of this policy lies not with Iran alone but with other countries too." "All these countries especially the Middle Eastern and regional nations need to do is to gain a better understanding of Iran and its Islam-oriented policies and principles, TEHRAN TIMES added.

"It is expected that with the efforts of the Islamic government and a little effort on the part of foreign governments, particularly those in this part of the world, Iran's foreign relations will continue its upward trend," it added.

The paper also touched on the issue of hostages held in Lebanon and said, "Iran will of course use its good offices with the Lebanese groups...to facilitate the release of Western hostages" adding "Iran too wishes to see its citizens including its former charge d'affaires in Beirut released this year."

TEHRAN TIMES in conclusion stressed, "The countries expecting assistance in this issue should also pressure Israel to free thousands of Muslims who have been incarcerated on no charges at all and to instruct its agents to release kidnapped Muslim activists like Shaykh Ubaid."

The Persian language daily 'JOMHURI ISLAMI' commenting on the same subject stressed that this year marks the start of the first 5-year development plan and "all conditions are created to ensure success of President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's administration." The daily however warned against neglecting "existing barriers" adding "adoption of a decisive and a correct attitude towards the bottlenecks is a precondition for success."

The main problems, according to the Persian daily, are conspiracies both from inside and outside the country. As for external conspiracies, it said, "The Islamic revolution cannot imagine being immune to these plots." But confronting these plots would become easier, once the country is free of internal problem and the authorities and the people unite their ranks, coordinate their actions and tread on a common path.

The editorial added, "The important issue is a decisive confrontation against the internal conspiracies." In the second half of the last Iranian year which coincided with the start of President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's administration, it became clear "the greatest and the most spiteful enemies of the Islamic Republic system are the capitalists and economic terrorists," said the paper.

It became clear that the policy of admonishment toward economic terrorists was counter-productive because experience has fully proved that capitalists understand no language other than that of force and a determined confrontation.

JOMHURI ISLAMI in conclusion urged the authorities to set aside the policy of leniency toward economic terrorists in the new year and instead take decisive actions against these criminals.

Daily Urges Pressure on Israel for Hostages

NC2503085990 Paris AFP in English 0839 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Tehran, March 25 (AFP)—Countries expecting Iran's help in freeing the Western hostages in Lebanon must exert pressure on Israel for the release of thousands of imprisoned Muslims, a leading Iranian newspaper said Sunday.

"Iran will of course use its good offices with the Lebanese groups, out of Islamic and humanitarian considerations, to facilitate the release of Western hostages," the TEHRAN TIMES said. "But the countries expecting Iranian assistance in this issue should also pressure Israel to free thousands of Muslims who have been incarcerated on no charges at all and to instruct its agents to release kidnapped Muslim activists like Shaykh 'Ubayd."

Israeli commandos abducted the Lebanese Shiite religious leader Shaykh 'Abd al-Karim 'Ubayd from south Lebanon last July.

The English-language TEHRAN TIMES, considered close to the Foreign Ministry, added that "Iran too wishes to see its citizens, including its charge d'affaires in Beirut, released this year."

Tehran has accused Christian militiamen in Beirut of having kidnapped four Iranians, including Charge d'Affaires Mohsen Musavi, in July 1982, the month of the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Seventeen Western nationals are held hostage in Lebanon, many of whom are believed to be in the hands of pro-Iranian militants.

Commentary Views U.S. Senate Decision on Jerusalem

NC2403201090 Tehran International Service in Arabic 1800 GMT 24 Mar 90

[From the "Behind the News" feature]

[Text] Clovis Maqsud, Arab League delegate to the United Nations, has criticized the U.S. Senate decision to recognize Jerusalem as capital of the Zionist entity. The PLO chairman yesterday said that this U.S. Administration is the first to call for an end to the Israeli occupation. Here is a report on the U.S. position:

At a time when the PLO chairman described the plan of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker as an attempt to

break the deadlock and open dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis, the U.S. Senate's decision revealed the true U.S. role and position on the Palestinian people's rights. The decision was a cause for anger, as Clovis Maqsud made it clear, but the Arab reaction was mute. Yasir 'Arafat actually praised the U.S. Administration's position, describing it as the first such adminstration to talk about the need to end the Israeli occupation.

A spokesman for the U.S. Department of State quickly announced that there has been no change in the U.S. position. However, the fact that the U.S. Senate has rendered a decision to consider Jerusalem the capital of the Zionist entity completely exposes American thinking, for the pressure groups operating within the U.S. Congress play a large role in U.S. decisionmaking.

The move to recognize Jerusalem as capital of the Zionist entity does not change much in the hostile policies of the United States, the country that provided financial assistance for the settlement of Soviet Jewish emigrants while simultaneously pretending that it seeks to promote peace. But the decision is serious, for it takes place as Zionist efforts are under way to settle Soviet Jews in Israel. David Levi, deputy prime minister and minister of construction and housing, in the outgoing Shamir government, laid the cornerstone for 4,000 apartments in Jerusalem to house Soviet Jews. Levi asked the Jews residing in that city to provide accomodations for the immigrants until the new housing projects are finished.

This means that the Senate's decision backs Zionist policies and gives it a legitimacy that will be useful to the Jews. The U.S. Administration does not object to Zionist policies. The most that this administration will do is express verbal dismay at the settlement of Jews in East Jerusalem. The Senate's decision and the United States' repeated refusal to denounce Zionist repression in UN Security Council meetings reveal the true face of U.S. policy. The United States hides its true position by embarking on peace moves, such as Baker's plan, whose true intention is to smother the intifadah and end it.

Commentary Says U.S. Indifferent to Hostages

NC2303143890 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 15 Mar 90 p 20

[Commentary by Omid Mas'udi: "U.S. Hostages—Objective or Pretext?"]

[Text] "The United States is more concerned about the trapped whales in the glaciers of Alaska than about the release of the Americans incarcerated in Lebanon." These are the words of Terry Anderson, one of the two U.S. hostages of the Islamic Jihad in Lebanon, in his message addressed to U.S. President George Bush a year ago.

Following Reagan's defeat, Anderson said, remarking on the issue of hostages, that in the past two years of the Reagan administration he had come near to being released many times but each time it appeared that the U.S. Government was using its influence in order to prevent any agreement from being reached. Now, months after Bush assumed power, and in the wake of the "telephone scandal of the White House," the truth of Terry Anderson's remarks seems to have been confirmed.

The U.S. President who categorically stated 11 days ago that no discussion had taken place about the release of the hostages has requested the White House officials not to make any kind of comment on his telephone conversation with an unidentified caller who had been pulling his leg in the past month. Regardless of the authenticity of Bush's telephone discussion with an unidentified individual, the question that plagues world public opinion is: How is it possible that one who was and is not in the least concerned about the release of the U.S. hostages in Lebanon, as can be seen from the above remark by one of the hostages, is talking about the establishment of relations with Iran in order to resolve the problem of the hostages!

With the overt support of the Phalangists in Lebanon, the U.S. Government abducted four Iranian diplomats in Beirut in July 1986. In practice it used the tactic of hostage-taking as a deterrent measure against the revolutionary forces of Lebanon, and it now endeavors to project itself as the victim of hostage-taking operations by the Lebanese forces and is using this to attain its objectives. Therefore:

1. The U.S. President, who basically is not very desirous of the release of the hostages, is trying to mitigate the pressure of world public opinion and the people of the world by appearing to be anxious for the resolution of the hostages in order to retain the trump card in the face of any crises that may emerge in the future. It is for this reason that the U.S. President repeatedly declares his readiness for the release of the hostages and refuses to meet the demands of the Lebanese forces, but expects them unconditionally to accept his demands regarding the hostages' release!

2. Experience has shown that the criminal United States has always paved the necessary ground for its operations before embarking on the perpetration of a new atrocity.

The raising of the point that the United States is anxious to end the hostage issue in Lebanon automatically presents the matter in a humanitarian light, just as every peace-seeking individual would wish. However, Washington propounds the issue in such a manner as to indicate that the Islamic Republic of Iran, Syria, and the national and religious forces of Lebanon are considered the actual agents in the affair, and this might be a way of preparing world public opinion for a sanguinary U.S. and Zionist onslaught on Lebanon under the guise of operations for the release of the hostages.

In such circumstances the maintenance of vigilance and preparedness on the part of the revolutionary forces of

Lebanon in order to build up a bastion of defense against all eventualities of a fresh U.S. and Zionist onslaught is necessary and vital.

3. As far as the incident of the telephone conversation with the White House is concerned, this has so far proved a major loophole in the extensive control system of the White House. The duping of the President of the United States by an unidentified caller has exposed the White House officials to immense ridicule and derision. The President had to ask the White House officials from refraining to comment on the matter. However, it has given the counterrevolution the permission to use it as a propagandistic maneuver to flaunt the chimerical issue of U.S.-Iranian relations and to raise the issue of "dealings" between Tehran and Washington.

If in the "Irangate" incident and the humiliation of McFarlane, the scattered pawns such as Mehdi Hashemi were able to assume a strident revolutionary posture and indulge in so-called disclosures, now this task has been delegated to lowly pawns such as Mehdi Ruhani in order to justify the defeat of the United States in the telephone hoax.

It was for this reason that Mehdi Ruhani entered the arena by granting an interview to "Le Parisien," published in France. He tried to involve others in the "White House telephone hoax" incident in order to raise suspicions about the personalities in whom the Iranians have faith.

However the people and the officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran have preserved their alertness against all kinds of U.S. plots and counterrevolution, as in the past, and Mehdi Ruhani would only be in greater disgrace if he attempted to transfer the White House crisis to within Iran, just as his predecessor Mehdi Hashemi could not blemish the reputation of the officials.

Even now the dossier of "Irangate" has not been closed and Mr. Poindexter, Reagan's National Security Council adviser, is under interrogation. The U.S. judicial authorities are now collecting evidence against the criminals of the scandalous U.S. attempt to establish telephone contact with Iran. It remains to be seen who will be summoned for impeachment in the U.S. courts.

Paper Says Bush Call May Be 'Another Irangate'

NC2303104090 Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL Weekly Edition in English 17 Mar 90 p 6

[Unattributed commentary: "Irangate Number Two"]

[Text] The U.S. administration scandal that started on November 5, 1986, one day after the details about the U.S. Security advisor Robert McFarlane and his accomplices' trip to Tehran was disclosed by Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, was later termed as Irangate by the media.

As a matter of fact, the aftermath of that scandal, even after four years, still continues. It was not only McFarlane who was doomed, but several top ranking officials, including the notorious Oliver North, had to pay with their jobs and dignity. Adm. John Poindexter, the former chief of the National Security Council is currently being tried on charges of his involvement in Irangate.

As believed by many, then President Ronald Reagan was the person responsible for the initiative but was spared by the U.S. judiciary to avoid humiliation to the U.S. regime. The U.S. statesmen believed that another Watergate would result in great damage to U.S. credibility.

Anyway it is an open secret that McFarlane, Oliver North and two other American officials visited Tehran with the full knowledge of Reagan.

Actually they did so under specific instructions from Reagan. And Reagan, in view of Iran's consecutive victories at the war fronts, did it to find a way to somehow stop Iran coming out as the victor in the imposed war.

Now Reagan's successor George Bush is in a similar mess. Apparently Irangate No. 2 is brewing. The Voice of America in its Farsi program on Friday morning quoted White House press secretary Marlin Fitzwater as saying that one month ago Bush placed a call to President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani but later realized that the person he talked to was not Hashemi-Rafsanjani. No other details were given. (The writer of this article listened to the said news broadcast at 7:30 a.m. on Friday, March 9).

Hashemi-Rafsanjani in his Friday sermons said the same thing. He said that he received the news in the morning which seemed strange. He said the White House released a press statement saying that Bush tried, one month ago, to talk to him on the telephone, but after conversing with someone on the other end of the line he learned that the man he was talking to was not the Iranian president. Hashemi-Rafsanjani added that he looked forward to having more details. He also jokingly remarked that perhaps another Irangate is in the making.

After Hojj. Hashemi-Rafsanjani's remarks the story was changed. The new version given by Fitzwater and a White House aide, Stephen Hart, said that the call was not made by Bush but by Hashemi-Rafsanjani. Hart said that since Bush has stated he would talk to anybody if it would help free the hostages he agreed to talk to the Iranian president when someone claiming to be Hashemi-Rafsanjani phoned Bush's office.

Of course U.S. media reports on the story are as ambiguous as the White House statements. But it can't be denied that some initiative was taken by the White House, not by President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's office, on the issue.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Hashemi-Rafsanjani rightly believed that "God willing, another Irangate is in the making."

The scandalous part of the story is that Bush and his subordinates have specifically and repeatedly denied that the U.S. administration was not in contact with the Islamic Republic of Iran. [sentence as published] When a London-based Lebanese newspaper Al-Hayat reported last month that the United States and Iran held secret talks in Geneva for securing the release of U.S. citizens held hostage in Lebanon, Fitzwater denied the report. He said there were no talks between the U.S. emissaries and Iran. Fitzwater emphatically stated: "There are no direct talks between the United States and Iran authorized by the president."

This statement was made on February 27. According to Fitzwater's Friday (March 9) announcement Bush had placed a call to Tehran one month back. So once again it is Iran and that is a focus of contradictory statements and plan lies being issued by the U.S. President and his aides. [sentence as published] As pointed out by Hojj. Hashemi-Rafsanjani it is strange that "the world's most powerful man should talk to someone without knowing whom he was talking to, despite all the facilities at his disposal."

Irrespective of who says what the simple truth is, obviously Washington has as yet not fully comprehended the Islamic Revolution and its outcome: the Islamic Republic regime. It is still looking at Iran and its officials in the same way it viewed the regime of the defunct shah. Most probably the telephone story was fabricated by Bush or his advisors with the hope that Tehran would give a positive reaction. Maybe they thought that Hashemi-Rafsanjani would let it be known to them that Bush should try again and dial the correct number.

Talking of phone calls one remembers the bygone days when the defunct shah was willing to go to any length and spend a fortune on lobbying to arrange a short phone conversation between him and the White House occupants. Mr. Bush and his advisors perhaps have a short memory. Tehran showed no exhilaration even when U.S. President, Ronald Reagan, sent four representatives four years ago. Of course Tehran was not rude to them. Neither would the officials be impolite if someone makes a call from the White House. If Mr. Bush is keen on starting a dialogue with the Islamic Republic regime, he can do so without unnecessary and scandalous efforts. He can do so without creating another Irangate but should be fully aware that Iran is an independent country.

Radio Commentary: Iraq Still Obstructing Peace

LD2503205590 Tehran in English to Europe 1930 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] At a time when the senior Iranian and Iraqi officials are busy surveying the UN chief's new proposal for the progress of peace talks in the Persian Gulf War, on Thursday [March 22] a letter was released at the UN, which included new information concerning violations of cease-fire by the Iraqi regime. The letter, which has been written to the UN chief by the constant representative of Iran to the UN, speaks of 134 cases of cease-fire violations by the Iraqi regime, which all have taken place in a period of less than a month. In this letter it has been indicated: In the first half of October 1979 the Iraqi forces have repeatedly violated Iran's frontier lines and carried out hostile operations inside Iranian territory. These operations include building of bunkers and canals as well as occupation of the Iranian bunkers in some regions.

It is to be noted that the Iranian representatives, letter to the UN will be published as a document of the Security Council, and in this matter cases of violations of the cease-fire by the Iraqi regime since the beginning of the official cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war will exceed 2,300. Since 20 August 1988 till the first half of October 1989, the regime of Iraq has violated the official cease-fire between the two states in various borders areas in more than 2,300 cases and as a result a number of the Iranian troops have either been martyred or injured or taken captive. Repeated cases of violation of cease-fire by the Iraqi regime have been reported to the UN chief and the UN Security Council by Iran's constant representative to the UN during the past 1 ½ years in a documented manner.

Violation of cease-fire by the Iraqi regime and that regime's obstructionism in the trend of peace talks and its refraining from retreating to the internationally recognized frontiers form a collection of political moves by the Iraqi regime, which are indicative of the fact that Iraq does not abide by the international laws. At present the Iraqi regime has over 26,000 square kilometers of the Iranian territories under its occupation and during the past 18 months, despite it has been clarified in the UN Resolution 598 and the UN chief's request, the Iraqi regime has refrained from giving these territories back to Iran [as heard].

The continuation of such illegal moves by the Iraqi regime and in case the Security Council does not take serious measures in this regards, the probability exists that the present nor peace nor war situation in the Persian Gulf region may turn toward a direction which is against peace.

Letter Sent to UN on Iraqi Cease-Fire Violations

NC2403074790 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 24 Mar 90

[Text] Last year the Iraqi regime violated the cease-fire 134 times from 1 to 14 October along the forces' contact lines and border areas. The Islamic Republic of Iran permanent representative to the United Nations sent a letter to the UN secretary general on Iraqi cease-fire violations during this period.

According to an IRNA report from UN Headquarters, during this period from 1 to 14 October, on 3 October in Marivan 64 Iraqi trucks carrying personnel and arms occupied two trenches belonging to the Iranian forces and occupied the (Siparez) heights in the Baneh region. Also during this period, the Iraqi forces fired on Iranian

forces in the (Nanu) region in Marivan. Iraqi tanks moved around in the [name indistinct] station 90, and group and individual bunkers were set up and a canal dug along the banks of the Arvand River. Also, observation and listening posts were set up.

This report adds that the letter from the permanent Iranian representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the UN secretary general will be disseminated as a UN document.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani Sets Out on 3-Province Tour

Tours Chah Bahar Region

LD2503055390 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 24 Mar 90

[Unidentified correspondent's report]

[Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani arrived at Chah Bahar airport this morning and was officially welcomed by the Friday imam, the governor-general, and a large number of provincial officials. In an interview with correspondents at Chah Bahar airport, the president described the aim of his trip to Baluchestan Sistan va Province as inspecting flood-stricken and deprived areas, meeting and talking to the people, and reviewing conditions at Chah Bahara port, as a free commercial port.

Then Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani and his entourage went to the villages of Owraki and Garm Beyt, near Chah Bahar, and received a warm welcome by their inhabitants. While talking to a number of villagers, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani reviewed the agricultural conditions and the creature comfort needs of the inhabitants.

He then went to a gathering of villagers. In a speech, he referred to the damage caused by the flood and the deprivation in the area, calling on youth in the villages to continue their education so that they can play an effective role in the reconstruction of the country and of their own region.

Finally, he pointed out: I hope that with the implementation of the five-year plan we will witness agricultural and economic prosperity in the region.

Later in his trip, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani inspected the Pishin Dam, 170 km north of Chah Bahar, and was given the necessary explanations by Energy Minister Namdar-Zangeneh and the Pishin Dam executive official.

It should be pointed out the Pishin Dam is a reservoir dam, with an initial capacity of 175 million cubic meters [CM], and a regulated volume of 91 million CM per year. After the installation of valves, its capacity will be raised to 250 million CM, with a regulated volume of 97 million CM per year. The reservoir will cover an area of 6,930 square km. The dam is 63 meters high and 400 meters long. Sixty percent of construction work on the dam has been completed, at a cost of 60 billion rials.

Speaks in Sistan va Baluchestan

NC2503084890 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0330 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani addressed political officials of Sistan va Baluchestan province last night and announced the government's plans to help this deprived area.

The Central News Unit reports that Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani pointed out that credits for underdeveloped areas have been allocated in the Five-Year Plan and that one of these areas is Sistan va Baluchestan. He stated: Zabol is important to the revolution and to the country. The situation that prevails in the city should be ended at any cost, and the living conditions of its people should be improved.

The president also pointed to the need to accelerate irrigation activities in Zabol and expressed hopes that the Pishin dam will become operational in two years time at the latest. He stressed that with the use of this dam and three others in the province, as well as with the storing of 400 million cubic meters of water, a change in the agriculture of the Sistan va Baluchestan area can be made.

In conclusion, the president expressed dissatisfaction at the living conditions of the villagers in the area. He pointed out that expert forces should be attracted and educational and private sector resources used to bring about change in the region.

Visits Hormozgan, Kerman Provinces

LD2503123390 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Excerpts] This morning, at the end of his visit to Sistan va Baluchestan province, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani was officially seen off by the governor general and the commander of the 10th fighter base as well as the province's political authorities and Sunni and Shiite clergymen. He left Chabahar for the port of Jask. The Central News Unit's correspondent reports:

Continuing his visit to the deprived regions of the provinces of Sistan va Baluchestan, Kerman, and Hormozgan, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani arrived in Jask this morning at the head of a delegation which comprises the minister of roads, transport and energy; the president's executive deputy; and the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council. He was officially welcomed at the airport by Hormozgan's governor-general; the substitute Friday imam of Bandar 'Abbas; clergymen; executive authorities; and the region's military-security forces.

On arrival in Jask, he was taken by helicopter to the deprived region of Bashagard in order to meet the area's Muslim people. On their way to the Bashagard area, Mr Hashemi-Rafsanjani and his accompanying delegation visited Khomeyni-Shahr and Puznen villages. [passage omitted]

The Islamic Republic's president and his accompanying delegation also attended a gathering of Bashagard area villagers, who had congregated in Khomeyni-Shahr village. The president expressed his pleasure at being in the deprived area of Bashagard and said: We have been familiar with the Bashagard area since the beginning of the revolution. We have always counted on your loyalty to the revolution and have felt your deprivation. The eminent leader [Khamene'i], too, is very familiar with this region. The president added: Despite the lack of natural resources, the Bashagard area is very rich from the point of view of potential human resources. The people of the area are worthy of playing a role in Islamic society. Your spirit of solidarity, high morale support of the revolution, and loyalty to the Islamic revolution is an investment which can turn your children into good and worthy youth for the revolution.

Referring to the shortage of drinking water in the region despite the presence of surface water, and stressing that there is water in the Bashagard area and that it must be exploited, he expressed hope that through the efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran's government, surface water would be brought under control in the near future and used for purpose of developing the deprived area of Bashagard. [passage omitted]

The president and his accompanying delegation were warmly seen off by the residents of the deprived Bashagard area and left for the town of Kahnuj in Kerman province in order to visit other southern parts of our country.

Speaks in Kahnuj

LD2503200890 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani arrived this afternoon in Kahnuj. Our correspondent reports from Kerman center:

[Correspondent] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani who is starting the new year with a tour of the deprived regions of the provinces of Sistan va Baluchestan, Hormozgan, and Kerman, accompanied by a delegation, arrived this morning in the township of Kahnuj and was welcomed by the Friday prayer leaders of the Kerman provinces, the governor, the Majles deputies from Kerman, a number of clergymen, inhabitants, and the brave tribes of the region. The president, then, while being escorted by a large number of the inhabitants, attended a gathering of tribes and inhabitants of Kahnuj, and in the course of remarks, while lauding the brave deeds and selflessness of the combative and the intrepid tribes of the regions, pointed out that the life of our nation and government has been overshadowed by the war up to now, and our first priority in the early years of the victory of the revolution is to attend to the problems and difficulties brought about by the imposed war. He expressed the hope that through the cooperation of people, in the era of reconstruction, the chief impetus and first priority will be given to the reconstruction of deprived regions.

In another part of his remarks, the president said: The world should know that the aim of the Islamic revolution was and is: the overthrow of the taghut [evil regimes], confrontation with arrogance, and the correct utilization of our own country's rich resources. Today, the duty of all committed and self-sacrificing forces who filled the arenas of war under special circumstances is to move along the path of reconstruction. Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, pointing to his recent visit to the deprived regions of Bashagerd and the southern parts of Sistan va Baluchestan, added: The conditions of the region compells the officials of the Islamic Republic to make greater efforts to lead deprived people toward the achievement of their worthy and deserving lives as human beings. Emphasizing the special environmental and climactic characteristics of the south-eastern regions of the country, the president expressed the hope that the Kahnuj region, with its natural potentials, may—in the implementation of the five-year economic and sociocultural expansion and sociocultural expansion program of the country—provide a substantial part of the basic needs of the country in the future. The president noted that the value of a rich soil and good climate is not less than gold and (?cash) and he affirmed that in the Islamic Republic, water and earth is allocated to persons who labor and desire to conduct an honorable life.

In conclusion, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, recalling the deprivations left over from the despotic times of the shah, and the extensive endeavors made by the Islamic Republic to eliminate the traces of deprivation from the face of the deprived areas, pointed to the strength of the generous tribes of the regions who procure a large part of the protein needed by the country. He said: Today, management, agriculture and all the riches of the country and the government belong to the people and when it is necessary it is the people themselves who put on their sacred soldier's uniform and defend their Islamic homeland.

Visits Kerman Tribe, Jiroft Complex

NC2603095290 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 26 Mar 90

[Text] Continuing his visit to Kerman Province's deprived areas, yesterday afternoon President Hashemi-Rafsanjani went to the 'Alidadi clan of the Soleymani tribe in Ganjabad in Sorkh Qal'eh, and the area's tribesmen welcomed him.

The Central News Unit reports that immediately after arriving, the president went to the tents of one of the clan's martyred clergymen and expressed sympathy to the martyr's family.

The president also discussed the life of the tribes with the tribesmen, and officials of the Organization for Tribal Affairs gave the necessary explanations.

The report states that Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani then inspected the Jiroft agro-industrial complex, which is affiliated with the Ministry of Agriculture. The report

adds that in continuing his visit to the deprived areas in Kerman Province, the president arrived in Jiroft where the people gave him an unprecedented welcome. It should be noted that the Jiroft Agro-industrial Company was formed in 1353 [1974] after land was purchased from landowners. The company's land currently totals more than 3,200 hectares, 900 hectares of which are citrus orchards.

Attends Planning Committee Meeting

NC2603095890 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 26 Mar 90

[Text] Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani; Mr. Mirzadeh, vice president for executive affairs; Mr. Ruhani, secretary of the Supreme Council for National Security; the minister of energy; the Kerman people's Majles deputies; the Kerman governor general; and the province's executive officials attended the Kerman Province planning committee meeting in Jiroft yesterday afternoon. The meeting's participants reported on the economic and agricultural situation in the region.

The Central News Unit reports that during this meeting, agricultural problems including stabilizing shifting sands, supplying water for agriculture, reviving pasture land, training, and roads were studied. The Central News Unit also reports that the president issued the necessary directives for progress in and development of agricultural activities as well as for extending necessary credit for development projects.

During this meeting, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani noted that credit has been allocated for creating educational centers in the country's deprived provinces and that this credit will be justly distributed among the deprived areas. He emphasized that more rapid steps should be taken for construction in this area since the time for utilization is near and so that favorable results can be achieved in the shortest period.

The president then called on the province's officials to implement the projects envisaged in the Five-Year Plan by the designated dates.

Emani-Kashani Sermon Criticizes Profiteers

LD2303115190 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 23 Mar 90

[Text] On the first Friday of the New Year, our Muslim compatriots today held the politico-religious rites of the Friday prayers all over the country.

Simultaneously, the immaculate shrine of the great leader of the revolution and the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran was today the scene at which vast numbers of people from various strata were present to hold the first Friday prayer of the New Year under the leadership [inamate] of Hojjat-ol Eslam val-Moslemin Emani-Kashani close to the immaculate tomb of Imam Khomeyni, may he be admitted to God's paradise.

In the second sermon of the prayers Emani-Kashani referred to the sacrifices of the Iranian nation, who have made selfless and untiring efforts to remove numerous difficulties since the beginning of the victory of the Islamic revolution. He then said: The great imam of ours, close to whose immaculate shrine we are now giving our prayers, received help and inspiration from the lord of the age, may our souls be sacrificed for him, as he led the Islamic revolution. Meanwhile, with regard to the strngth of his faith and piety he was a true disciple of the lord of the pious and commander of the faithful 'Ali, peace on him. He [Khomeyni] was also a true deputy to his holiness the guardian of the time, may God hasten his blessed appearance. Next to the infallible imams, peace be on them, we do not know any human being to be as detached, as faithful, as pious, and as God-loving as he was—a person who would be as indifferent to material ways and affairs of the world as he was. It was the Christ-like breath of the imam of the ummah which inspired human beings to be resisting and steadfast. It was that element which presented to the world of Islam such a great movement.

Our leader, His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, is the disciple of the imam of the ummah in scientific terms as well as in practical ways. And he discharges his guardianship affairs in accordance with the guardianship mission whch the noble prophet, God's peace on him and his scion, and our saints have bestowed on the guardian of the cause of the Muslims.

Stressing that the Islamic regime is moving toward the objectives and lofty aspiration of divine governance with greatness, the acting Friday prayer leader of Tehran said that our society needs all-out efforts to cut through its difficulties. He said: The government, through strong planning and thanks to its deep appreciation of the difficulties, is making efforts. He said: The government through strong planning and thanks to its deep appreciation of the difficulties is making efforts. The Majles and the judiciary and all other officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran are making efforts together with the nation. These efforts must be maximized. In a regime which has a divine perception of the world, all strata must put in efforts of maximum strength. Those who have financial resources must set the pace in performing the work; they must not be content with their small contributions. They must try to meet the needs of society.

At the end of the sermons Emani-Kashani strongly ctiticized the hoarders, profiteers, and opportunists who create a black market to maximize their profits. He called on them to abandon profiteering and hoarding and to be content with fair and low profits. As such they must observe piety and refrain from falling into the trap of materialistic temptation, thereby serving the people in their own society.

Khamene'i Assesses Clergy in Address

LD2503092190 Tehran Television Service in Persian 1750 GMT 24 Mar 90

[Address by Ayatollah Khamene'i to seminarians in Mashhad—recorded]

[Excerpts] In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. I thank God Almighty for granting me yet another opportunity to be present among you, the ulema of the system, esteemed seminarians, and revolutionary scholars of this grand seminary of excellent repute. First I would like to extend my felicitations on the occasion of the new year, but more significantly on the approach of the auspicious month of Ramadan. [passage omitted]

I would like to reappraise the present condition of the clergy in a few sentences. These remarks are not new but they are important. Never before in history has the Shi'a scholastic community enjoyed such magnitude. Never before has it enjoyed such financial capability and other valuable means such as the media, the pulpits, the press and so on. Never before has it enjoyed such worldwide fame. Never before has it enjoyed such respect by all strata of people—Muslim or non-Muslim, or, with regards to Islam, Shi'a or non-Shi'a. Never before has it had so many enemies, quantitatively or qualitatively, that is to say with regard to power, or the political, social, and military standings of many powers. Finally, never before has it shouldered so many responsibilities. [passage omitted]

I would like to briefly remark on the meaning of that responsibility. First of all it means self-responsibility; in other words, teach yourself before teaching others, without which it would be impossible to carry the responsibility load; something will go wrong somewhere, and the load will remain on the ground, hence the one carrying it will ruin his reputation as well as that of another. To carry the load safely to its destination, we should better ourselves. When it comes to self-betterment, I place myself before everyone else. Self-betterment is necessary in all clerical branches, and in all obligations of the religious ulema, clerics, and those who wear the robes. [passage omitted]

Today we have a number of ministries involved in planning and directing the country's economy, using thousands of employees and spending billions of tommans. There are the ministries of finance, plan and budget, industries, heavy industries, mines and metals, commerce, and agriculture. It is a gigantic system. During the past 10 or 11 years the heads of governments have usually been personally involved in the affairs. That is, the running of the country's economy.

For a merchant, whose whole life is dependent on the programs of the governing body, to give a fifth [khoms] of his income—if he does—to a theologian, that is not Islam's economic system. It is a small part of it. Yes, khoms, Zakat [Islamic taxes], the book on commerce, other books on transaction, limited partnership, subletting, mortgage, and so on could provide the country's economic system. As it is becoming so. [as heard]

At present, we are running our banks on a limited partnership basis. In the past the system of limited partnership was not the same as it is now. Then, one person could to go another and say: "I will give you this money and you go and use it in a business. Then we will share the money." That is a far cry from the limited partnership system becoming the basis for managing a large section of the country's financial affairs, that is the banks. Are they the same thing? [passage omitted]

It is Islam's jurisprudential wisdom that determines today's issues. All this is responsibility. For that reason, as I have said, never before in history have the clergy had as many enemies or friends. [passage omitted]

Today, all—perhaps that is an exaggeration—a large portion of the energy, money, initiative, and planning of world arrogance is spent on trying to steer you seminarians, scholars, and theologians away from the true path of the revolution. Yes, they are spending money on that, because they know that, as the clergy has been the front-runners of this revolution, the war, revolutionary issues and politics, if they continue to do so, arrogance could never combat this revolution.

They want to remove this obstacle from their path; you, that is: the society of Islamic clergy. They are drawing up plans for the task. Anyone who is closer to the line of the revolution and to pure Mohammedan Islam, may God's peace be upon him and his scion, is also closer to the blows, attacks, insults, hue and cry, onslaughts, viciousness, and maliciousness of arrogance.

They are not against any cleric; on the contrary, they are very favourably disposed towards some clerics. It was exactly the same under the monarchic system. That very system which wanted to uproot the clerical system, was very fond of some clergymen. They gave the court clergy money; they worked for them; they would even say to them, please make your turbans a bit bigger and grow your beard a bit longer. We have seen that. We know about it. They were very fond of them and they would meet them too.

Of course, because that system was arrogant, vicious, and mean to its very core, it was not even appropriately grateful for the kindness and servitude of those clerics. Even those who were the servants of that system [the monarchy], to the rest of the clergy, yes, they were bold and they gave them [the other clerics] orders, but not to the system itself. They even used to be humiliated by the ones at the top of the system and their highly placed lackeys. We also knew about that: they used to cold shoulder them, be disrespectful towards them. They could see how base they were.

It is the same today. Today, too, they are against good clerics; they are against the imam [Khomeyni] who did not withhold anything in the path of God, who used

every ounce of his resources in that path, and who, at every instance of his life, moved toward that lofty and sacred aim. And God helped him. They [forces of arrogance] were against him. They were not against such and such a counterrevolutionary, reactionary, and servile cleric.

Anyone who is or was condemned for an offense or a sin by the Islamic judicial system—and, God be praised, we are proud that our judicial system, which mainly consists of ulema, clergymen, jurisconsults, and religious scholars, does not turn a blind eye to any offender even if he is wearing a clerical robe; that is a source of pride for us. No one can accuse the clergy of turning a blind eye to fellow clerics. No, not at all; you can see for yourself. The offense of an offender who is wearing a clerical robe is seen and judged; he is tried. And punishment is assigned on the basis of the greatness or smallness of the crime. Of course, there are instances in which the punishment is greater because he is turbaned than it would be if he were not. That does occur.

Sometimes people come to us, some honorable people, well-intentioned people who do not mean any harm; they say: Sir, if a lay person commits this offense, would they be treated in the same way? With that same severity? We say: Where a clear punishment is specified, well, in that case, it is the same for everyone. However, where the judge has some discretion, where he can be more or less severe in assigning punishment, one of the factors that dictates greater severity is this [clerical] robe. This is not a reason for less severity. It is not a factor for less severity, it is a factor for greater severity. And judges act on that basis.

Anyone who, for conspiring, for a coup d'etat—planning a coup d'etat—for opposing the Islamic system, for insulting the combatants, the selfless ones, and the pure and holy youth who have given dignity to Islam—our youth, during this period—anyone who insulted them, conspired against them, acted maliciously and was tried and punished, or who rose against the revolution, the system and was tried and punished, or who was overcome by moral corruption, an ethical wrongdoing and was tried and punished—you can see that, immediately, foreign organizations become devoted to that corrupt and punished cleric and they sing his praises. They embark on propaganda on his behalf. They consider him to be victimized. They bring the system into question: Why did they kill him? If he is old, [they behave] in one way; if he is high-ranking, in another way; if he is low-ranking, another way. They are, therefore, not against all clerics. They are against clerics who strive along the path of God.

[passage omitted] If anyone opposes this revolution and this glorious system, he would not be forgiven. We shall deal with him, whoever he is, whatever rank he has. We shall not tolerate it. Of course, one step behind are those who are indifferent. There are those who are really indifferent towards the revolution. That, in our opinion, is not laudable. Some people talk, write, preach and publicize Islam as they did before the revolution. As if there had been no revolution in this country, Islam and the Koran had not been revived, and Islamic jurisprudence had not become the basis for the country's management. They are indifferent towards Islam, but are very particular about problems and shortcomings. We know of some peole who did not say one word of criticism in the face of all the corruption during the Satanic [Shah's] regime. But now, in the Islamic system, when all affairs are managed towards goodness, growth, piety and sovereignty of religion, they have become sensitized to the situation. If any problem arises in any corner they promptly rise to criticize.

Of course we are not afraid of criticism. Let them criticize. But such people are not very worthy. Those who are sensitive about defending the Islamic system are worthless. [passage omitted]

It would be a mistake for anyone to think that the Islamic system has not the means to publish. Why, it would act without consideration, because it is God's work and there is no room for consideration in God's work.

Well, those who oppose [the system] are so [as heard]. Those who do not oppose but do not serve [the system] should reconsider. They should value this Islamic system. When, throughout the centuries, has Islam been the basis of government and glorified so much in the world, as it has today? They should honor it. [passage omitted]

You must observe several points with regard to words which are delivered from pulpits. First, the people's needs; what do the people especially need today? Find out. Today, people need morality; they need the fundamentals of revolutionary thought: On what foundation is this revolution based? People need that. You must think about it. And the greatest source is the words and commands of the imam [Khomeyni], may God be satisfied with his deeds, and some of the written and spoken teachings which have been uttered during these 11 years by some of the eminent people which we have, God be praised. And, for those interested in studying, reference should be made to the Koran and to the hadith [the prophet's teachings] about the rule of Islam, Islamic society, and about the fact that Islam is the religion of life. That concerns the point of need.

Second point: Observe moderation. Moderation means, do not go to extremes in any direction. Some people in pulpits indulge in extremism. It make no difference whether it is extremism in the direction of moral dimensions or political dimensions. Extremism in a theologian is unsuitable; it is not praiseworthy.

Of course, people have a great need for morality. We are in need of a moral revolution so that we can do away with bad characteristics in ourselves, in our nation, in every single person and in order that we can engender the characteristics of a true Muslim with just those specifications which have been specified in religious teachings and in the holy Koran. Morality is very necessary. But it

should not be the case that when we speak of morality or when we are reading the hadith for the people, we are completely removed from the issues of the day, the issues of the revolution, issues of life, the history of these eventful 11 years, world issues.

As I said, when some people mount the pulpit, when one listens to them speaking from the pulpit, it is as if there had been no revolution in this country; as if a leader such as the late Imam, may God be satisfied with his deeds, never existed; and as if there had been no war. They speak like that; completely removed from reality. That is extremism, in that direction.

In the political direction, too, extremism is wrong. Some people in the pulpit, in their remarks, devote the entire discussion, from top to bottom, to political matters; not a word of morality, advice, or religious commands. Even in a village, for example, you see a gentleman who has mounted the pulpit in such and such a village and is speaking, for example, about the revolution in Nicaragua: how was it that the Sandanistas were defeated in Nicaragua; the reasons for the coming into existence of the country of Namibia, and its history, and so on. What does that matter, after all? Everyone is talking about that in any case on the radio, in newspapers, on television. That is extremism in that direction. Extremism is not suitable in any direction.

In the month of Ramadan, divide the time in the pulpit into religious commands—some religious commands, that is all; practical commands; individual ones, collective ones; a certain amount of advice and ethics chosen from the holy verses of the Koran and the noble hadith; emphasis on them and on their correct use. And a certain amount of current events: the people's duties with regards to the revolution, in connection with the country, with regards to the enemy; recognizing friends, recognizing enemies and so on. Thus, moderation and lack of excess is one those points.

Another point which you must observe is the specific occasions. Sometimes a matter is correct, but raising it on certain platforms is unsuitable; it will not fall on receptive ears. Such things should not be uttered. We have a great deal to say. Some weak stories or narratives; some weak reasoning [sentence unfinished]. Whenever you are in the pulpit, the pulpit must be strong [as heard] even if it is on an elementary level. I always give an example, saying, a book which is written for the first or second year of school says the same thing about a mathematical issue as a book which is written at high levels of mathematical logic. The subject matter is the same: in this case [the school book], too, they say, if you add two apples to two other apples, you will get four. That will still be the same after the child has grown and studied for 10 or 20 years. It does not change; even though in this case it is stated at one level and in that case [the more sophisticated book] at another level and in different words. That is how it must be. Speak simply, but never incorrectly. Care must be taken that the [training] sessions on the pulpit which used to be held—it would be very good if they were held now as well, so that these things are corrected from the aspects of form and content.

With regard to studying in the seminary and programs in the sacred religious seminaries, be it in Mashhad, in Qom or in other places, there is a great deal to say, but there is no opportunity or time. Let me just say that for confronting the countless and complicated problems of the world which we face, a program and a structure other than that available to us is required. This program [the current programme in seminaries] was not designed for these needs; perhaps it was not even designed, it just emerged by itself in this form. Even though some great ulema have, God be praised, been trained with this same program over the course of time. However, planning the programs and drawing up the subject matter and form of the program in religious seminaries, the division of Islamic sciences and skills in seminaries, the assessment of needs, breaking things up into sections, allocating the time, taking care with respect to comprehensiveness and other things—all these are necessary, and must take place as soon as possible. In Qom, too, God be praised, some work in being done; in Mashhad, too, just as his eminence Mr Tabasi, may he have long life and may God keep him, who is truly a worthy and precious man, has said, some work is taking place. We hope that the work takes place more rapidly and reaches the stage of implementation as soon as possible.

I pray that exalted God will grant you success and that he will make you, the seminaries and all of us subject to the blessings of his holiness the Lord of the age [the hidden imam], may our souls be sacrificed to him. God willing. May God's peace and blessings be upon you.

Commentary Scorns Majles Deputies for Delay

NC2303152090 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 8 Mar 90 p 2

[Commentary: "Useless Act"]

[Text] Several Majles deputies' protesting the credentials of three new Tehran deputies during the Majles open session yesterday afternoon was useless. All three deputies are well-known and have a clear and revolutionary service record as deputies and in ministry posts. Such protests do nothing but give rise to the people's dissatisfaction, unless we accept that mixing religion and politics, which is the legacy of the late Modarres, has become mixing religion and lines. It is hoped that the protesting deputies will take back their protest and instill hope and trust in the people of Tehran.

People eagerly went to the ballot boxes. The outcomes of the elections were delayed because of the supervisory committee and the executive committee's deliberations, studies, and discussions. Now the credentials have been cast into the bottomless pit of playing with lines.

Before the revolution, we used to pray in the Majles and in the pulpits asking God not to let us be ruled by people

with no compassion. Today the Majles has become one of the important axes of rule. Let us not do something so people can say that these people did not even show themselves compassion.

Paper Declares 'Awn Has Lost'

NC2303131890 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 11 Mar 90 p 2

[Editorial: "'Awn Has Lost the Game"]

[Text] Rebellious Lebanese General Michel 'Awn has voiced his preparedness to reopen dialog within the Arab peace plan framework to end the fifteen-year civil war in that country. In a press interview Friday [9 March] 'Awn said Christian infighting and Christian-Moslem wars will not be resumed.

'Awn's statement has come at a time when his armed conflict with the Phalangist forces of Samir Ja'ja' has ended in a deadlock. The clash had begun for gaining control over eastern Beirut. His pledge to keep his guns silent has not been made out of concern for civilian casualties. He is only in too weak a politico-military position to continue the battle.

By now he has understood that he is no longer the so-called "leader of Christians' but head of a Christian faction only.

By and large his military defeat, given the fact that militarism is his characteristic feature, is also a defeat for French and Iraqi military adventurism in Lebanon. 'Awn is well aware of the fact if his "militarist idol is shattered among his 1,500-man [figure as published] army, he has no secure tenure to continue in the political as well. He is then probably already thinking of a haven, like Paris for instance, to exile himself too.

Meanwhile the minds behind the al-Ta'if plan too are cognizant of the fact that 'Awn cannot be around in Eastern Beirut as an Army commander. His presence poses a serious question at the political credibility of President al-Hirawi especially after so much bloodshed.

In the same interview 'Awn has also said that he stretches a "fraternal hand" towards Syria. Damascus is of course aware of the fact that his statements are only made out of weakness and are a far cry from genuine desire for cooperation and peace.

'Awn has lost. This is a fact and nothing like his own statements verify this. In the situation arising from politico-military weakness of the man, it is mostly advisable that Damascus should in no way treat him as a key personality on the Lebanese political scene.

In other words, time is not on 'Awn's side and he knows it. And that is why he is desperate to sit at the negotiating table with Syria. A speedy talk and deal with Syria will provide him with some pretext to linger on in the arena. A few months back his supporters had the power and practically forced religious leaders in East Beirut to kiss the general's picture. Well, no such stuff any more. 'Awn has lost and that is where his sudden cognition of realities and peace overtures are coming from.

Return of Arab League HQ to Cairo Deplored

NC2303131290 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 15 Mar 90 p 3

[Report prepared by the TEHRAN TIMES staff]

[Excerpts] The proposed plan for the shift of the Arab League Headquarters from Tunis to Cairo was a result of the 16th extraordinary Arab Summit held about 10 months ago in Casablanca, Morocco.

An Iranian expert commenting on the issue told the TEHRAN TIMES, "In our opinion, changing the Arab League Headquarters from Tunis to Cairo is not a cause for worry or concern."

Hojjat ol-Eslam Hasan Aminian, head of the experts group for the Middle East, at the Institute for Political and International Studies said, "After all Egypt is a major Islamic and Arab country."

Aminian said, "What does concern us is that the Arabs everywhere should be independent, united and respectful."

He said that signs of transfer for the League's headquarters to Cairo were clear at the Casablanca summit where Egypt was readmitted to the organization after 10 years of expulsion.

He said that observers are of the opinion that the Casablanca summit was very beneficial for the Zionist regime and Egypt.

"Of course we have to mention here that many Palestinian groups have opposed the decision," Aminian said. [passage omitted]

Aminian said, "Egypt was kicked out from the League in defense of Palestinian people and their inspirations."

"What we are asking the League now, since Egypt had been ousted from the League for defense of Palestinian rights and destruction of the Zionist regime is: "What changes have been wrought in the Arab world for it to readmit Cairo in its fold?" Aminian asked. [quotation marks as published]

"Have the Camp David accords been annulled? Has Egypt emerged from the vicious and evil circle? Or has the filthy regime occupying the Holy Qods stopped its crimes against the Moslem people of Palestine and Lebanon? And even more important has the Tel Aviv regime withdrawn its occupation forces from Palestinian occupied territory?", Aminian asked.

Aminian, however, said that the decision to re-admit Egypt to the Arab fold or change the venue of the League's headquarters will harm the Palestinians and

their cause. He said the Palestinians are still fighting their holy war. [passage omitted]

Nepal

Riot Police Foil 23 Mar Demonstrations

BK2303155790 Hong Kong AFP in English 1526 GMT 23 Mar 90

[Text] Kathmandu, March 23 (AFP)—Hundreds of riot police cordoned off central Kathmandu areas Friday [23 March] and foiled planned demonstrations by pro multi-party campaigners while across the country at least 50 people were arrested.

Unofficial reports said that police arrested about 400 people here and elsewhere in Nepal on Friday but a Home Ministry spokesman said only 50 people had been arrested, mostly in connection with observance of the opposition-called national solidarity day on Friday. He added that most would be released later Friday after questioning.

A heavy deployment of hundreds of riot police foiled opposition plans Friday to mark the solidarity day with a large anti-government rally and demonstration in central Kathmandu's historic Basantapur Square, witnesses said. Opposition activists and students, some shouting slogans denouncing Nepal's 30-year-old partyless Panchayat political system, staged small demonstrations in at least six other venues around the capital before the police moved in and arrested them, witnesses said. They added that the arrested were treated roughly by police.

The national solidarity day was called by the banned opposition Nepali Congress Party and the United Leftist Front to press their demands for the re-establishment of a multi-party system and full human rights. But the heavy police presence here and in other cities appeared to have stifled the protest plan, while analysts noted that most of the top opposition leaders had been arrested in the past five weeks.

One political observer said that "because the majority of the leaders of the banned opposition and student activists were already under detention... the national solidarity day has not been as successful as was expected."

An opposition source said that 150 people had been arrested in Kathmandu, 200 at a massive rally in Narayanghat some 100 kilometres (60 miles) south of here and about another 50 in the districts of Chitwan, Lalitpur, Dharan, Birgunj and elswhere.

Earlier Friday about 400 students from the Nepal Adarsha Secondary School marched through the streets here carrying black flags as a symbol of democracy before police dispersed them and were seen arresting three.

Police and students clashed at Mahendra Ratna Rajya College near Kathmandu and three policemen and two students were injured while at least were arrested.

Riot police also arrested 19 students during a baton charge at the Nepal engineering campus near here to disperse some 1,000 students who were shouting anti-Panchayat slogans, witnesses said.

A small demonstration gathering trainee nurses and students of the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital at Maharajgunj was also reported. Speakers denounced police brutality, abuses of human rights and the indiscriminate arrests of their colleagues, professors and other professionals. Staff members of the teaching hospital also held a prayer meeting in memory of people who were killed by police while demonstrating over the past five weeks. They have been demanding the release of medical personnel arrested by authorities.

Riot Police Break Up 25 Mar Demonstrations

BK2503133890 Hong Kong AFP in English 1321 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Kathmandu, March 25 (AFP)—Riot police using tear gas and batons broke up pro-democracy demonstrations on several college campuses around Nepal's capital Sunday [25 March], arresting about 15 students, student sources and witnesses said.

Some 500 to 600 students rallied on the campus of Tribhuvan University's (TU) Engineering School, chanting slogans against Nepal's partyless panchayat system of government, Nepal Students' Union General Secretary Nabindra Raj Joshi said. Witnesses said the students burned an effigy meant to symbolise the panchayat system and raised a black flag of protest over the campus on the outskirts of Kathmandu.

When they began throwing stones the police intervened, firing tear gas, witnesses said. Student sources said about 15 students were arrested, but authorities confirmed only two or three arrests.

The student demonstrators were protesting the detention of about 700 people during a police raid Tuesday on a university auditorium during a political lecture, according to Mr. Joshi. All but 150 of those attending the lecture were released the same evening or the next day. Of the 150 placed under arrest, 125 were freed Sunday, Nepalese Government Chief Spokesman Radhe Shyam Bista announced. "Now only about 25 people—including the president of the Democratic People's Human Rights Protection Forum, Dr. Mathura Prasad Shrestha, the vice president of the Human Rights Organization of Nepal, Dr. Devendra Raj Pandey, and several professors—are still under detention and their cases are being examined."

Students on the campus of TU's law school also staged a protest March Sunday to back calls for multi-party democracy in Nepal. They dispersed quickly when police made a baton charge, witnesses said.

Protest demonstrations were also held at Padma Kanya (girl's) College, Trichandra College, Ratna Rajya College

and Amrit Science College, all affiliated with TU. The student rallies disrupted classes on many campuses.

Parents grumbled that they are scared to send their sons and daughters to college in view of the indiscriminate arrests and the clashes between police and student supporters of the multi-party movement during the past five weeks. "We prefer boys and girls to spoil one academic year rather than get their heads broken or be arrested and tortured by police," said Mr. Sanu Mann Shakya, who has four children of college age.

Tuesday's mass arrest also drew condemnation Sunday from the Nepal Medical Association (NMA). "The NMA strongly condemns this arrogant police action against these people who represent the conscience, aspirations and hopes of the Nepalese people," the group said in a statement. The association has threatened to suspend all but emergency medical services in the Kathmandu valley on Wednesday unless medical personnel arrested in connection with the democracy movement are released by then.

The students, along with activists from Nepal's outlawed political parties, are demanding greater human rights and the restoration of parliamentary democracy in Nepal, where the panchayat system was installed three decades ago by King Mahendra, father of the present King Birendra.

Sri Lanka

Indian Troops Quit Sri Lanka, End Intervention

BK2403073090 Hong Kong AFP in English 0729 GMT 24 Mar 90

[Excerpt] Trincomalee, Sri Lanka, March 24 (AFP)—Indian troops Saturday quit Sri Lanka, ending an acrimonious and bloody 32-month-long military deployment in the troubled island nation. The last of some 2,000 soldiers and officers of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) sailed out of the China Bay Harbour in this eastern port town at 9:46 a.m. (0416 GMT) in four Indian naval ships.

"We came as proud soldiers, we are getting back as proud soldiers," said Lieutenant General Amarjit Singh Kalkat, commander of the IPKF, before getting on board one of the ships.

The Sri Lankan Army gave a guard of honour while a Sri Lankan naval band played farewell music at the jetty before some 400 grim-looking Indian soldiers boarded one of the ships, "Magar," in single file.

Foreign Minister Ranjan Wijeratne, who was among those who saw off the troops, said Sri Lankans would never forget the sacrifices made by the Indians to preserve the island's territorial integrity. "I must thank each of you and those who have sacrificed their lives", he said in a brief speech on board the "Magar," adding: "We cannot forget them. Let them live in peace and harmony."

Sri Lankan Army officers hugged their Indian counterparts and shook hands warmly shortly before the "Magar" began sailing out to sea on its way to India, with the soldiers waving and clapping. [passage omitted]

Premadasa Thanks India

BK2503071890 Hong Kong AFP in English 0655 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] Colombo, March 25 (AFP)—President Ranasinghe Premadasa has thanked India for pulling its troops out of northeastern Sri Lanka and said that their deployment in the island three years ago was the result of "short sightedness."

"We are grateful to India, the people of India, and its prime minister, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, for withdrawing its forces from Sri Lanka as pledged," he told a gathering at an art centre here Saturday. "It is a historic day," he added, referring to the pullout earlier Saturday of the last of 2,502 Indian soldiers from the eastern town of Trincomalee. The pullout marked the end of a 32-month-long acrimonious Indian Army presence in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Premadasa, who was elected president in December 1988 with a pledge to send back the Indian soldiers deployed in the island's Tamil-majority northeast following a July 1987 bilateral accord, said he had achieved the mission by dialogue.

The troops began arriving in Sri Lanka to act as peacekeepers soon after the then Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and former Sri Lankan President Junius Jayewardene signed the accord to end Tamil separatism.

Mr. Premadasa said in his speech that the Indian troops came to the strife-torn island due to "short sightedness." Analysts said his remark was an attack on Mr. Jayewardene, who only a week ago praised the Indian Army for its "sacrifices" in maintaining the island's territorial integrity.

India lost 1,155 soldiers in its military campaign to disarm the dominant Tamil militant group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), from October 1987 after it rejected the accord and refused to lay down arms. The LTTE, in a dramatic turn of events, began talking peace with Colombo in April last year.

Mr. Premadasa said that although he had been cautioned against trusting the LTTE, whose hundreds of guerrillas still possess arms, "I trust them. I trust anyone to the point of distrust. What else can I do?"

The presence of Indian troops caused a diplomatic row between New Delhi and Colombo after Mr. Premadasa

called on June 1 for their immediate withdrawal. New Delhi refused but after negotiations agreed to a phased pullout.

Mr. Gandhi was defeated in general elections in November. A new government which took power in India led by Mr. V.P. Singh said it would take back all the Indian troops from Sri Lanka by March 31.

Wijeratne Comments

BK2503122290 Colombo International Service in English 1045 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Text] The entire Indian Peacekeeping Force [IPKF] deployed in the North and East of Sri Lanka for the past two years and eight months left the island yesterday with the last contingent leaving the shores of Sri Lanka yesterday. The last person to board the ship in Trincomalee was Lieutenant General Amarjit Kalkat. A large number of local and foreign media personnel and VIP's were present to witness this historic occasion. Three ships of the Indian Navy took the 2,000 remaining soldiers home, while their belongings were loaded onto two vessels.

According to our correspondent, who was at the scene to record the final withdrawal of the IPKF, the soldiers who lined up on board the vessels looked happy and cheerful. The minister of foreign affairs and state minister for defense, Ranjan Wijeratne, represented the Sri Lankan Government on this occasion. Also present were the Armed Forces chiefs and senior government officials. The high commissioner for India, L.N. Mehrotra, accompanied by Lt. Gen. A.K. Chatterjee, chief of staff of the Indian Army; Vice Admiral Ramdas; and Air Marshal Chand were present at the Trincomalee harbor to witness the final withdrawal of the peacekeeping force.

Exchanging pleasantries on board the vessel prior to the departure of the Indian soldiers, Minister Ranjan Wijeratne said that the soldiers came to Sri Lanka as the peacekeeping force to disarm militant groups in the North and the East and that (?of course) they achieved some success. However, unfortunately, the mission of the IPKF lengthened due to the activities of a particular militant group. The situation was unforeseen when the two countries signed the peace accord. Mr. Wijeratne said that more than 1,500 Indian soldiers lost their lives in the ensuing situation, and the Indian Government had to incur a big expense to maintain the troops in the island. The minister said that in the circumstances, there was no doubt that they had to make great sacrifices.

Mr. Wijeratne recalled the meeting he had with the former prime minister of India, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, in Belgrade, and said that Mr. Gandhi told him that India wanted to establish peace in Sri Lanka. He said that Mr. Gandhi also told him that a wrong impression would be created if India failed in this task.

The minister paid tributes on behalf of the government to Mr. Gandhi, who was in office when the accord was signed, and for the course of action adopted by him. He said that Mr. Gandhi acted with understanding when Sri Lanka conveyed its wish that the IPKF should be withdrawn by 31 December 1989. He also paid tributes to former Indian Minister of Foreign Affairs Narasimha Rao.

Mr. Wijeratne said that later the present prime minister of India, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, and his foreign minister, I.K. Gujral, viewed the situation and with all sincerity acted toward the withdrawal of the IPKF by 31 March 1990 and made a pledge to this effect. Keeping to their word, Minister Wijeratne said that they have withdrawn the Indian troops one week ahead of the scheduled date. Expressing his sincere thanks to the Indian leadership for this action, the minister noted that they are friendly neighbors and should always act with understanding and trust. Mr. Wijeratne expressed the wish for continued growth in relations between the two countries, bilateral economic cooperation, and closer friendship between the peoples of the two countries.

Radio Cites Premadasa

BK2503140190 Colombo Domestic Service in English 1245 GMT 25 Mar 90

[Excerpt] President R. Premadasa said that since 1987, the cordial relations with India deteriorated, but the constraints were removed by 1000 hours yesterday. Addressing the 50th anniversary celebrations of the Ceylon Workers Congress in Hatton this morning, Mr. Premadasa said that the withdrawal of the Indian forces was concluded unconditionally. He said the most important factor in the withdrawal was that it was not subject to any conditions. The president stated that he hoped to solve several problems through consultations with India. He said that the present government of Vishwanath Pratap Singh had won the confidence of Sri Lanka.

He stated that several important clauses had been proclaimed in the Indian prime minister's policy statement recently. According to the policy statement, India accepted and would protect the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and unitary status of Sri Lanka. India would not permit any militants to attack Sri Lanka from its soil. And the third factor was that the Indian Army would be completely withdrawn by 31 March.

The president expressed his respect and gratitude to the present Indian Government, its prime minister, and the Indian people for having withdrawn the Indian forces one week prior to the deadline. Mr. Premadasa emphasized that the new Indian Government had accepted the fact that the responsibility of ensuring the protection of the island remains with the Sri Lankan Government. Similarly, the Indian Government had also accepted that it was the prerogative of the Sri Lankan Government to administer justice to all sections of the community in this country.

Mr. Premadasa said that the Indian Government had demonstrated by its action that it was indeed wrong for

a country to interfere in the internal affairs of another. The president recalled that he had stated in his foreign policy statement of the election manifesto for the last presidential election that he would solve problems without being under obligation to any country. However, in his actions he would maintain friendly relations with all countries. He said that from now onwards friendly relations with India would be strengthened. The president noted that in particular [words indistinct] start from whatever country, it would be on an equal basis. He said that all internal policies would be carried out on the same basis.

The president reiterated that our national and foreign policies would be based on justice. In like manner, the heritage of our people would be resolved on the basis of justice and not on the basis of race, religion, or language. He said that these policies were formulated not only to win votes. The president emphasized that no power block will be permitted to act contrary to its conscience. He said that all must act unitedly with the belief that justice will prevail. Action must be based on justice, and not with the next election in view. The president said that already it has been proved that he does not say one thing during the election campaign and change his policies after gaining power. [passage omitted]

Police Arrest 37 Suspected Subversives, Seize Arms

BK2303093490 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0855 GMT 23 Mar 90

["OANA/pool" item]

[Text] Colombo, March 23 (LANKAPUVATH)—Security forces arrested 37 suspected subversives and recovered shot guns and muzzle loading guns in separate operations conducted in the Monaragala District yesterday. A government communique issued today states that security forces conducting search operations at Diyakobala, Maligawila, Rahugala, Thanamalwial and Badalkumbura in Monaragala arrested 37 suspected subversives and recovered shot guns and muzzle loading guns.

The communique further states that on information received security forces recovered two GK-43 weapons, 7 GK-47 magazines and ammunition and arrested 2 suspected subversives. In Amparai, 3 armed youths robbed a shop belonging to A.G. Dharmadasa. At Ruhunagama 5 armed Tamil youths robbed from the residence of W.R. Don Dionis goods valued at Rs. [rupees] 37,000.

In Trincomalee on information given by an ex-EPRLF [Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front] member security forces recovered 614 rounds of 5.56 ammunition and 9 mm magazines. In Anuradhapura, security forces arrested a suspected subversive at Hidogama.